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Women IN Music 2025

FEATURING

ERYKAH BADU

Doechii

Tyla

Megan Moroney

Gracie Abrams

aespa

GloRilla

Meghan Trainor

Ángela Aguilar

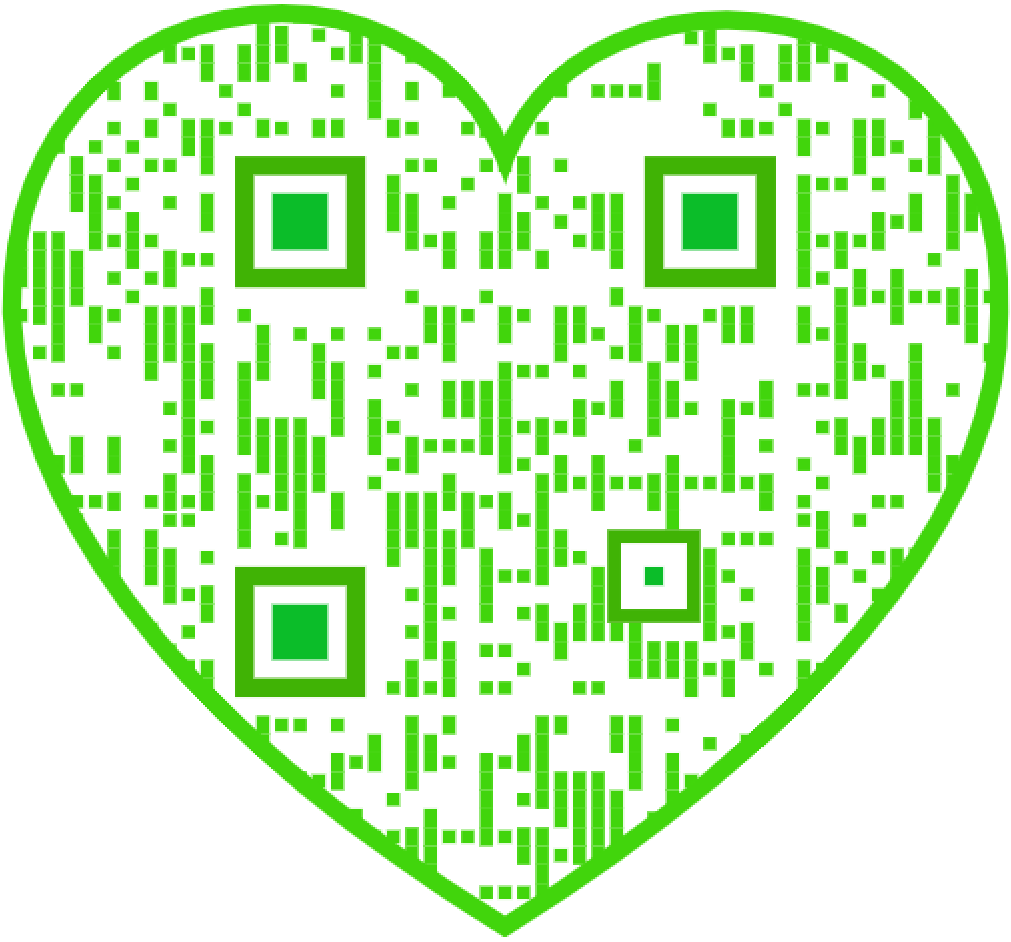
Muni Long

Jennie

+

EXECUTIVES OF THE YEAR

WOMEN AGENTS TAKE THE LEAD



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Women in *Music*

LIST 2025

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The Orchard PRESENTS

↑WOMEN

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Bala **MEXICO**

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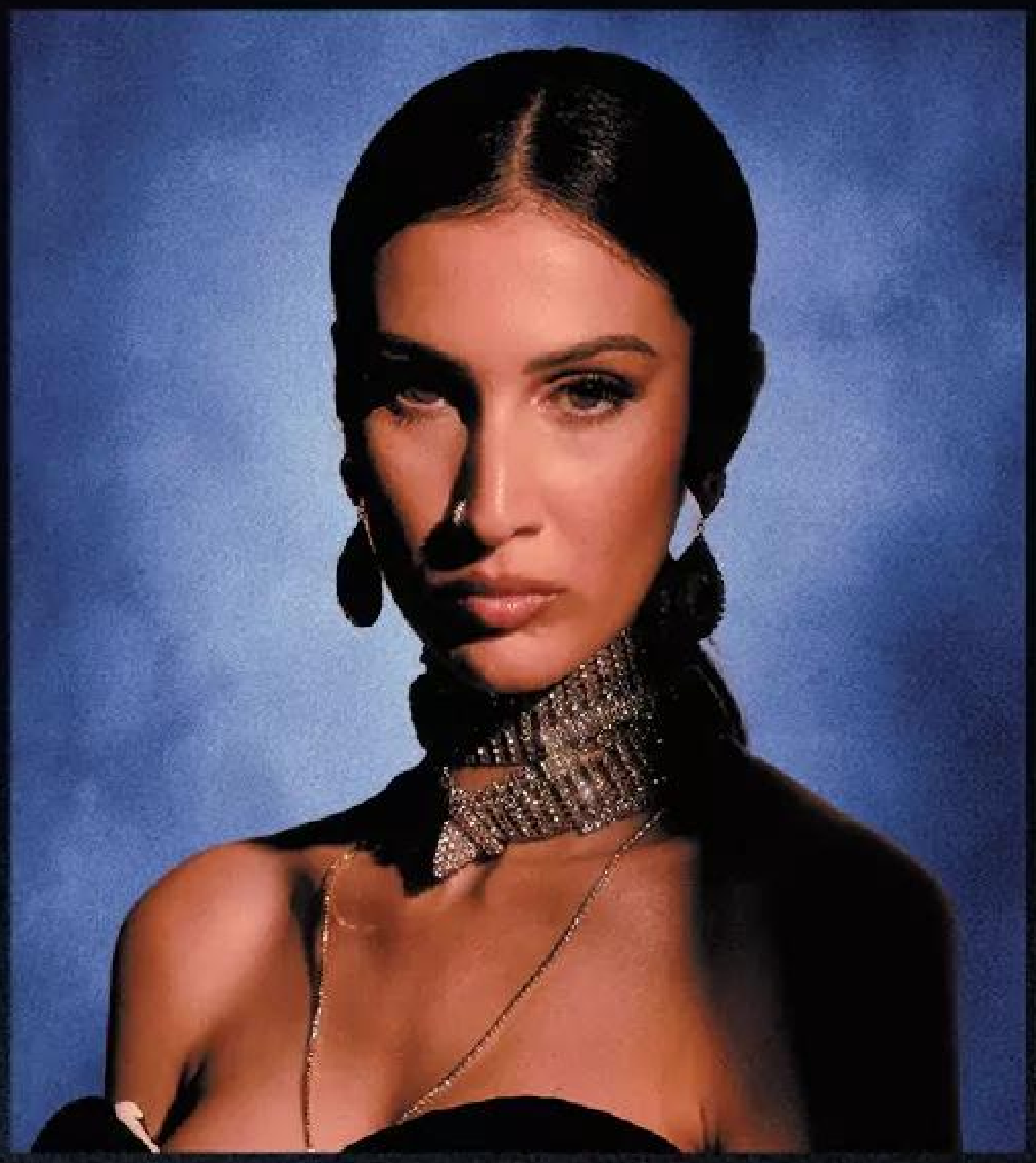
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MFS **JAPAN**

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Poetisas no Topo 4 **BRAZIL**

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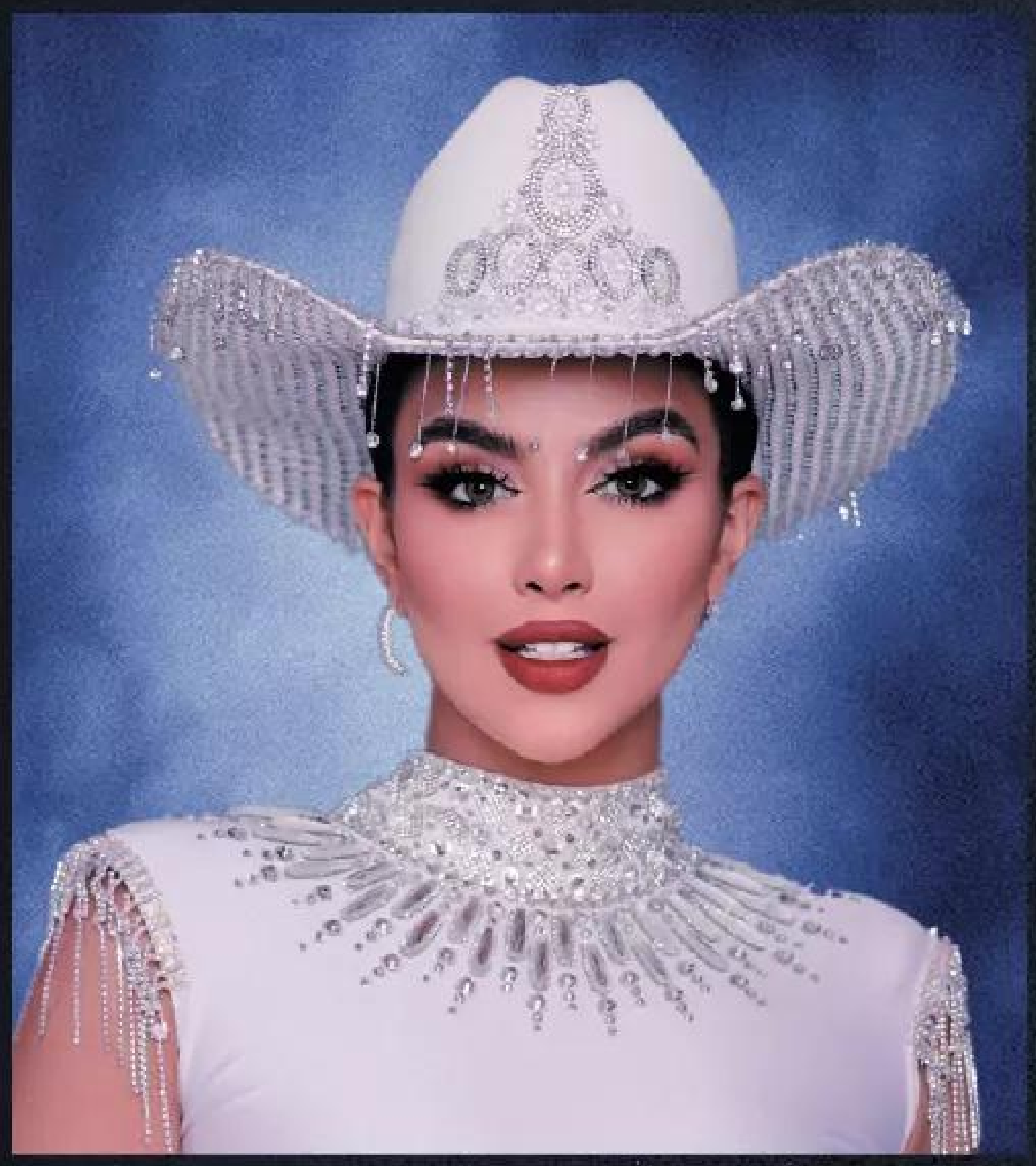
Six Sex **ARGENTINA**

FROM AROUND THE WORLD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VSTRA **VIETNAM**

Winny **NIGERIA**

Yamy **CHINA**

LISTEN NOW

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NO. 5

ON THE COVER
Erykah Badu photographed by Jai Lennard on Feb. 7 at Mars Hill Farm in Ferris, Texas.

THIS PAGE
Muni Long photographed by Joelle Grace Taylor on Dec. 13, 2024, in Los Angeles.

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Billboard will publish its next issue on April 19. For 24/7 music coverage, go to billboard.com.

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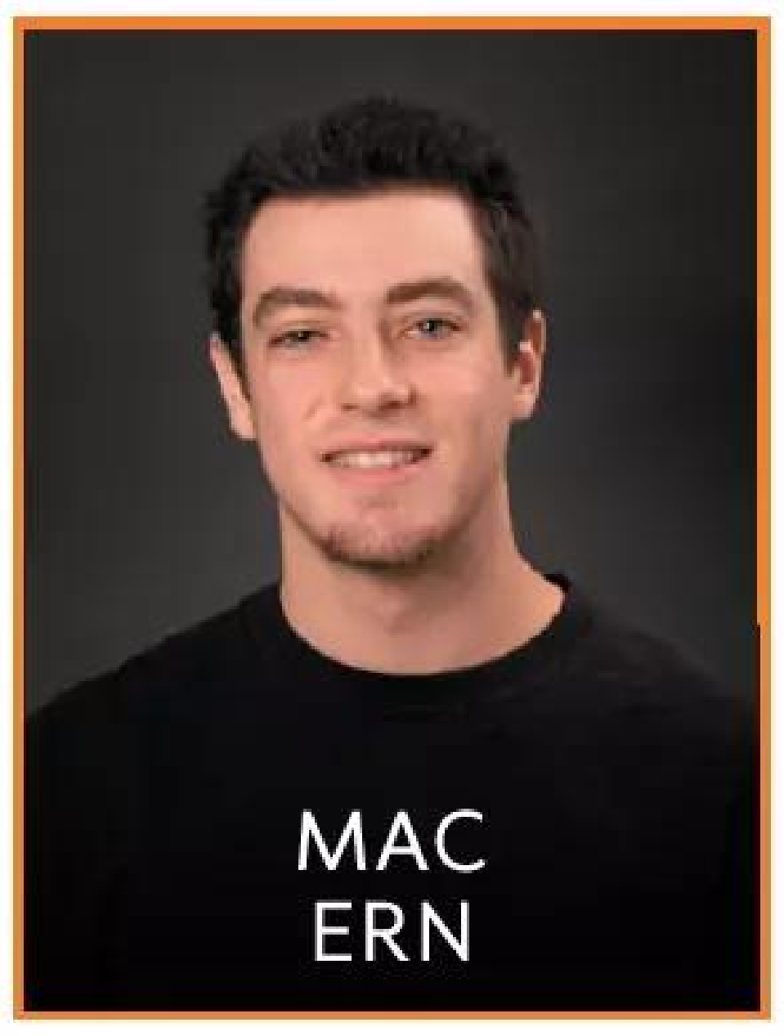
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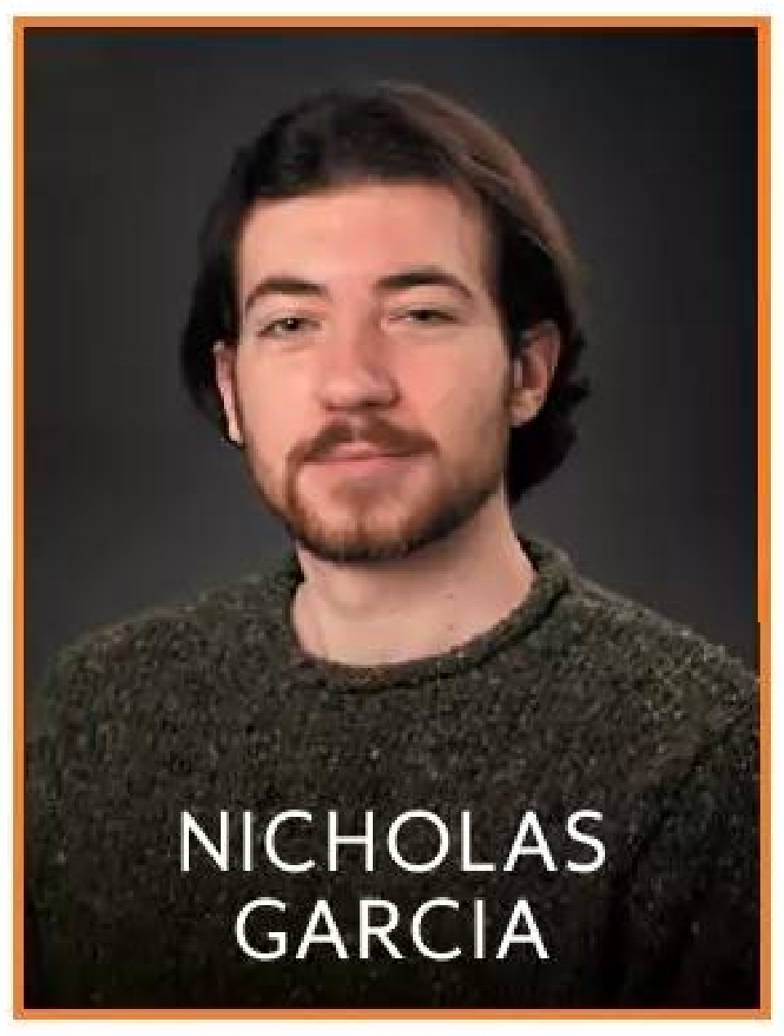
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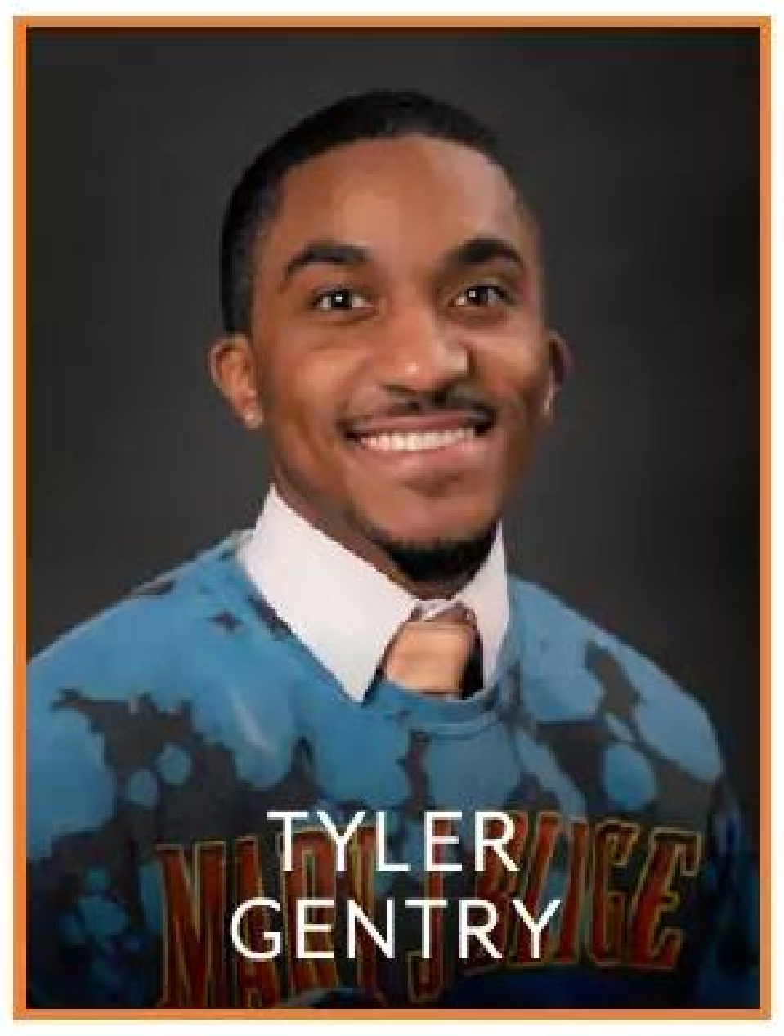
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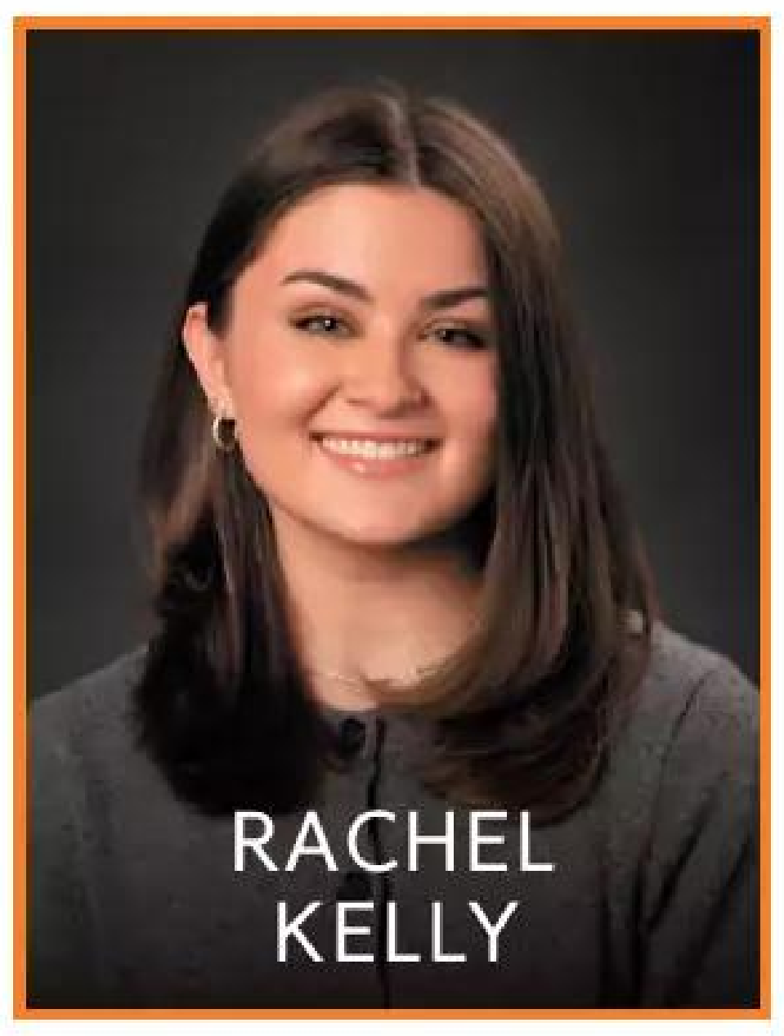
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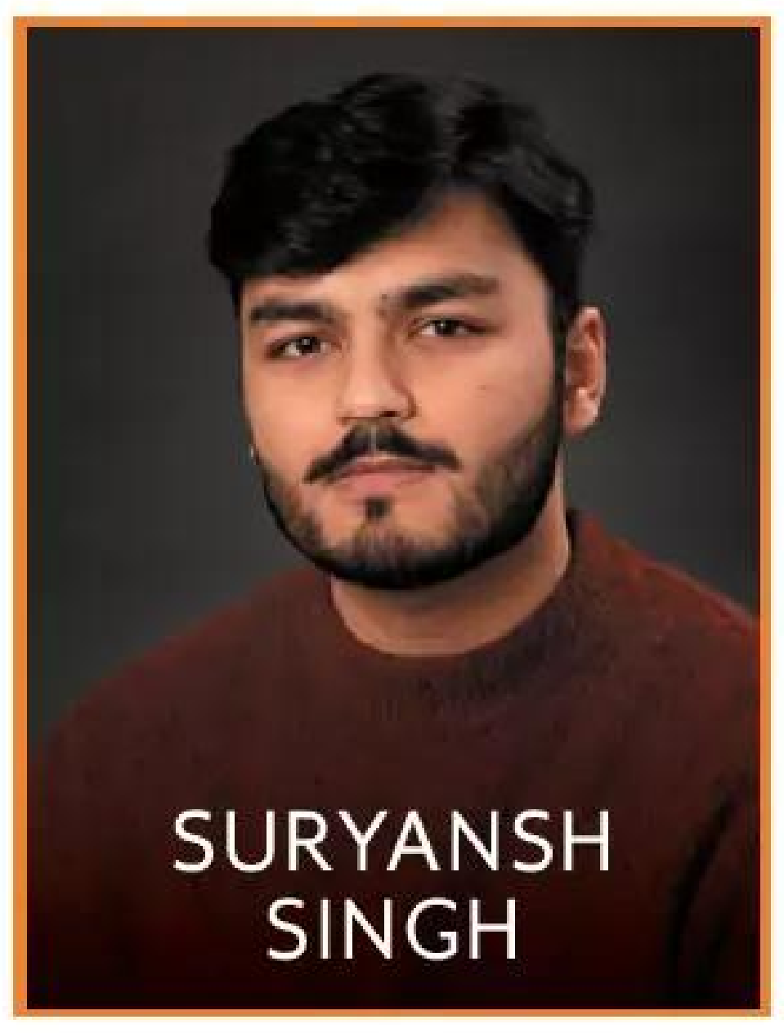
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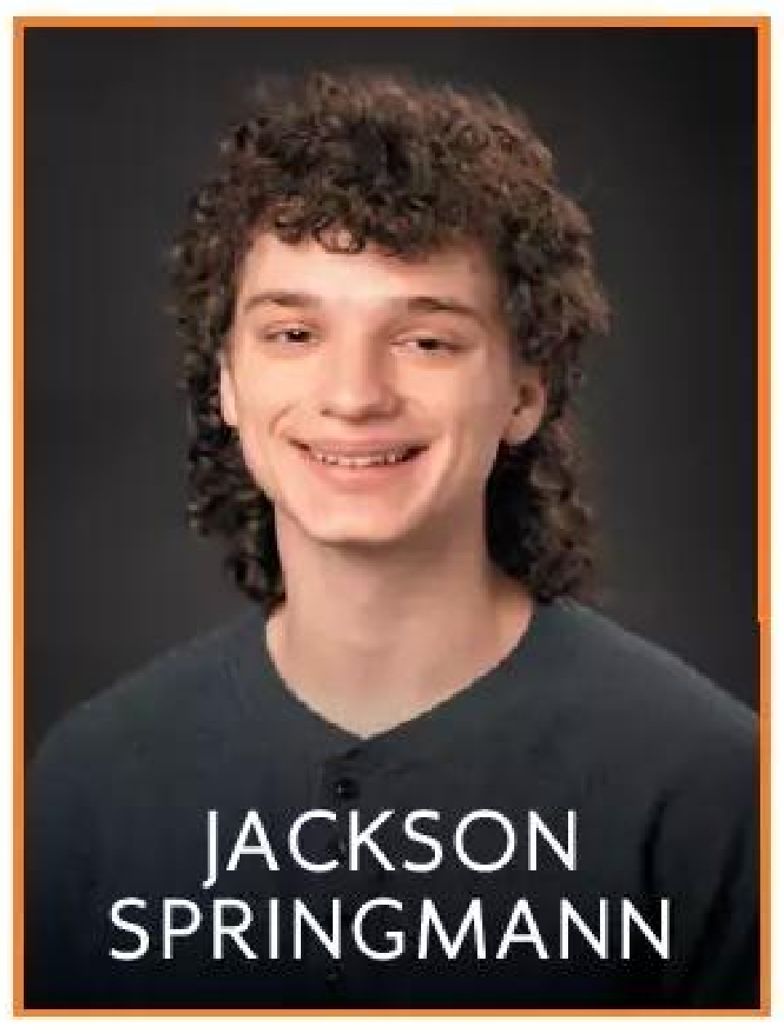
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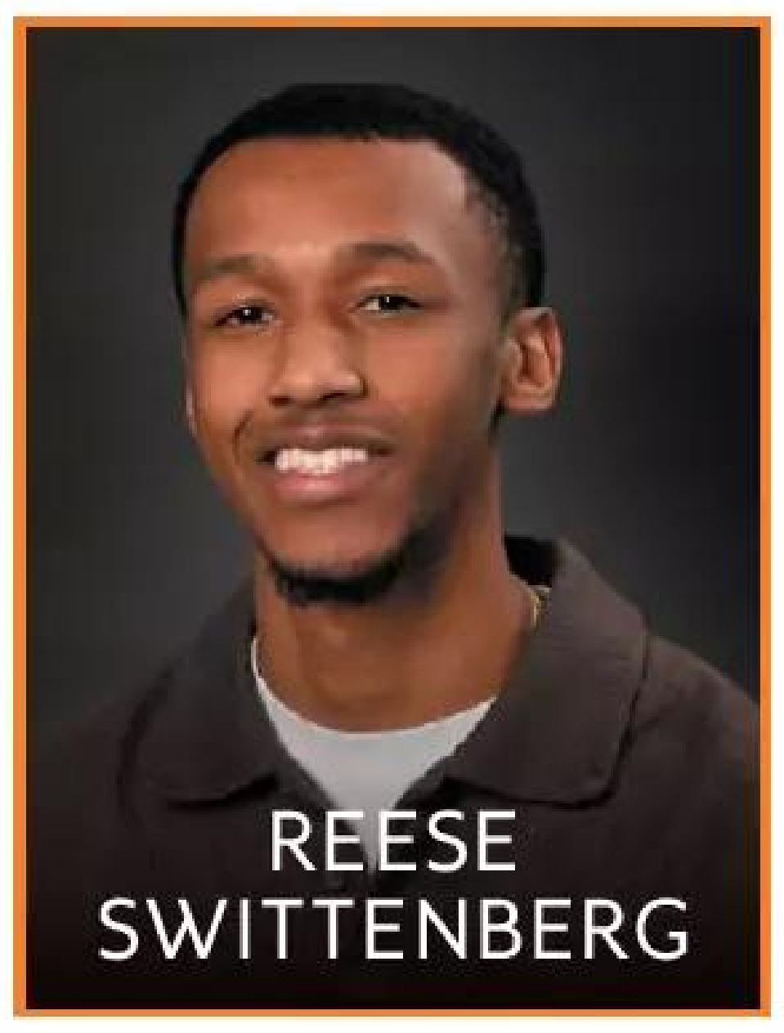
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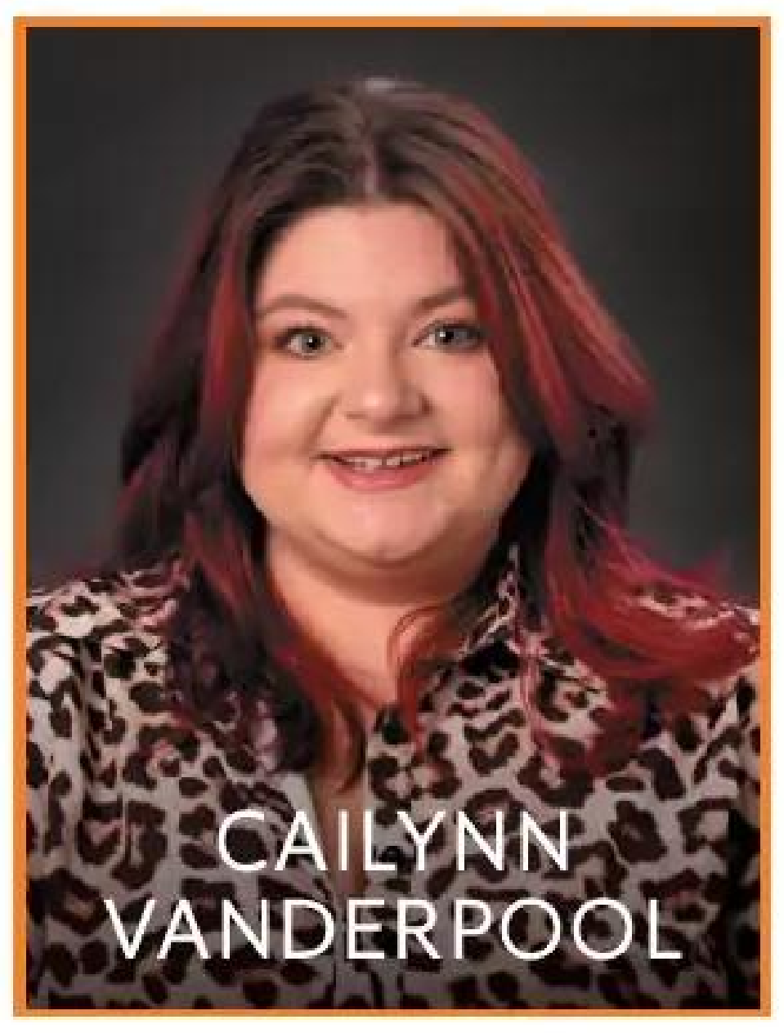
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From left: Ningning, Karina, Giselle and Winter of aespa photographed by Abi Polinsky on Feb. 10 in New York.

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and **LATIN**

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For the Women in Music issue, we have chosen to highlight Girls Who Code for their commitment to equity in technology, as they help provide students with the education and experience needed to secure meaningful jobs after graduation.

WARNER MUSIC GROUP

charts

DATA FOR WEEK OF 3.22.2025

FRANK LEBON

Lady Gaga Has A Monster First Week With *MAYHEM*

BILLBOARD 200

1

MAYHEM

Lady Gaga

LAST WEEK	PEAK POSITION	WEEKS ON CHART
–	1	1

LADY GAGA'S *MAYHEM* parties atop the Billboard 200 as the superstar scores her seventh No. 1 with her latest studio album. The set launches with 219,000 equivalent album units earned in the United States in the week ending March 13, according to Luminate — marking 2025's biggest week by a woman and the largest debut by a woman in over six months. (Sabrina Carpenter's *Short n' Sweet* arrived at No. 1 on the Sept. 7, 2024-dated list with 362,000.) *MAYHEM* also launches with Gaga's largest streaming week ever — 108.1 million on-demand official streams for its songs.

Traditional album sales for *MAYHEM* totaled 136,000, with vinyl accounting for 74,000 of that sum — bolstered by the set's availability across 14 variants, including signed copies and versions with bonus tracks ("Can't Stop the High" and, on a Target exclusive, "Kill for Love").

MAYHEM was announced in January, and its March 7 release followed three top 30-charting hits on the Billboard Hot 100: the No. 1 "Die With a Smile" (with Bruno Mars), "Disease" and "Abracadabra." Seven more album tracks debut on this issue's Hot 100.

Gaga ushered in *MAYHEM*'s release with her livestream Little Monsters Press Conference presented by Spotify (March 6) and her appearance as host/musical guest on NBC's *Saturday Night Live* (March 8). She teamed with Mastercard to premiere the "Abracadabra" music video during the Grammy Awards (Feb. 2) and for fan-focused Priceless Experiences tied to *MAYHEM*. Gaga's promo run also included stops on First We Feast's *Hot Ones* (Feb. 13) and the NBC-Peacock *SNL50: The Homecoming Concert* (Feb. 16).

—KEITH CAULFIELD

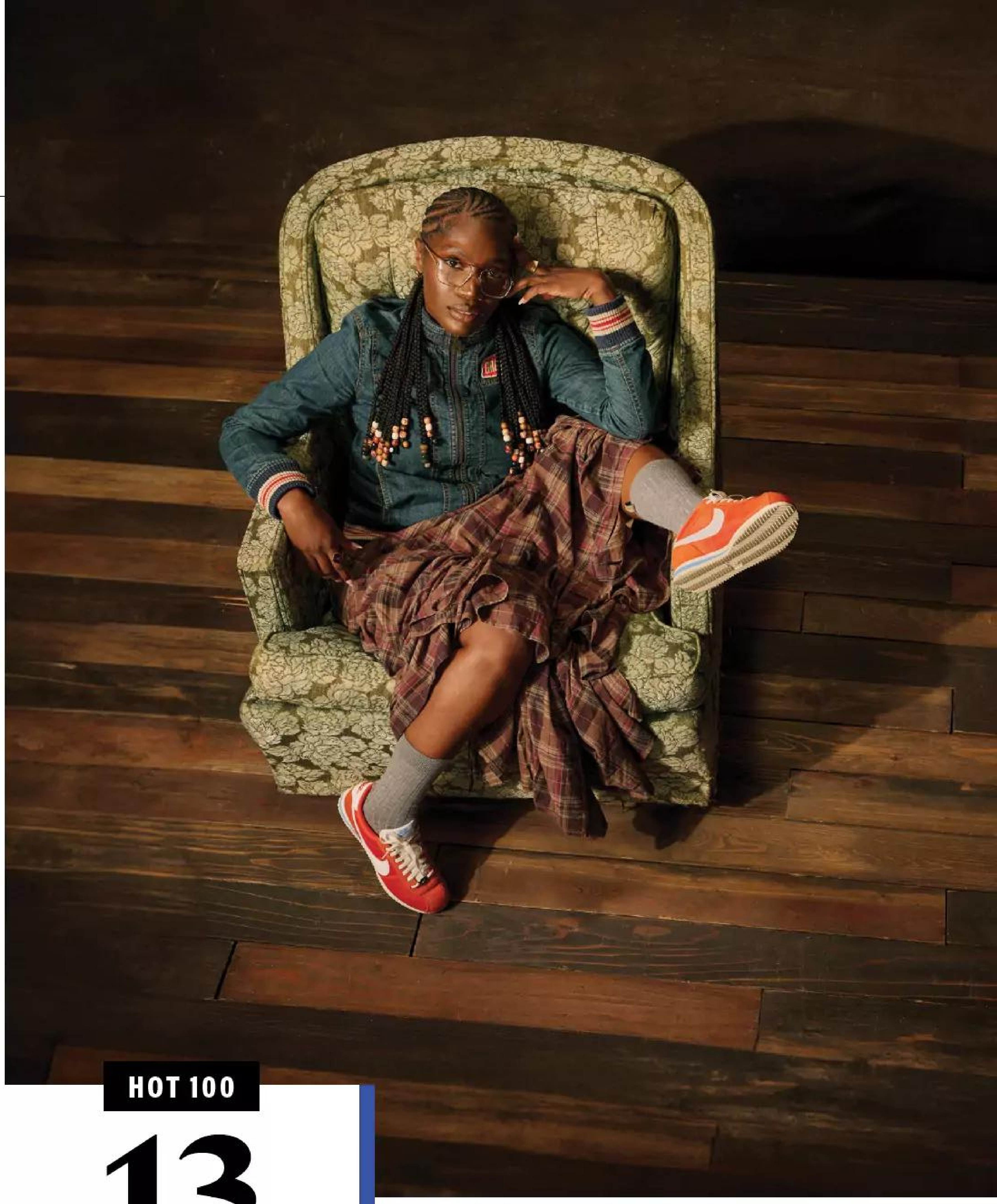
charts

DATA FOR WEEK OF 3.22.2025

Hot 100

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title	Artist	PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)	IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
1	1	1	#1 for 4 WEEKS **Luther**	**Kendrick Lamar & SZA**	SOUNWAVE,J.M.ANTONOFF,ROSELILAH,M-TECH,SCOTT BRIDGEWAY,K.WASHINGTON (K.L.DUCKWORTH,S.I.ROWE,A.BOGGS,S.J.DEW,M.A.SPEARS,J.M.ANTONOFF,R.L.BACHA,M.BERNARD,K.WASHINGTON,R.M.AKERS JR)	PGLANG/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	1	16
2	2	②	**Die With A Smile**	**Lady Gaga & Bruno Mars**	BRUNO MARS,D'MILE,LADY GAGA,ANDREW WATT (BRUNO MARS,S.G.GERMANOTTA,D.EMILE II,J.E.FAUNTLEROY II,A.WOTMAN)	STREAMLINE/INTERSCOPE/ATLANTIC/ICLG	1	30
3	3	3	**Not Like Us**	**Kendrick Lamar**	MUSTARD,S.MOMBERGER (K.L.DUCKWORTH)	PGLANG/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	1	44
5	5	4	**A Bar Song (Tipsy)**	**Shaboozey**	S.COOK,N.SASTRY (C.O.CHIBUEZE,S.C.COOK,N.SASTRY,J.JONES,J.A.KENT,M.A.WILLIAMS)	AMERICAN DOGWOOD/EMPIRE/MAGNOLIA MUSIC	1	48
4	4	5	**TV Off**	**Kendrick Lamar Featuring Lefty Gunplay**	MUSTARD,S.MOMBERGER,SOUNWAVE,J.M.ANTONOFF,K.WASHINGTON (K.L.DUCKWORTH,D.I.MCFARLANE,S.A.MOMBERGER,M.A.SPEARS,J.M.ANTONOFF,K.WASHINGTON)	PGLANG/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	2	16
6	6	6	**APT.**	**ROSE & Bruno Mars**	BRUNO MARS,CIRKUT,O.FEDI,R.CHAHAYED (R.PARK,A.R.ALLEN,C.B.BROWN,R.CHAHAYED,O.FEDI,P.M.LAWRENCE II,BRUNO MARS,T.M.THOMAS,H.R.WALTER,M.D.CHAPMAN,N.CHINN)	THE BLACK LABEL/ATLANTIC	3	21
⑧	⑧	⑦	**Pink Pony Club**	**Chappell Roan**	D.NIGRO (D.L.NIGRO,K.R.AMSTUTZ)	KRA/AMUSEMENT/ISLAND/REPUBLIC	7	39
11	⑩	⑧	**Nokia**	**Drake**	ELKAN (A.GRAHAM)	OVO SOUND/REPUBLIC/SANTA ANNA	8	4
7	7	9	**Birds Of A Feather**	**Billie Eilish**	FINNEAS (B.E.O'CONNELL,F.B.O'CONNELL)	DARKROOM/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	2	43
9	9	10	**Lose Control**	**Teddy Swims**	INFAMOUS,AMMO,J.BUNETTA (J.E.COLEMAN,J.C.BUNETTA,M.RODRIGUEZ-DIAZ,MIKKY EKKO,J.C.DIMSDALE)	SWIMS INT./WARNER	1	82
⑬	⑪	⑪	**That's So True**	**Gracie Abrams**	G.ABRAMS,A.DESSNER,J.BUNETTA (G.ABRAMS,A.HOBERT)	INTERSCOPE/ICLG	6	21
12	12	12	**Beautiful Things**	**Benson Boone**	E.BLAIR (B.BOONE,E.BLAIR,J.L.LARSEN)	NIGHT STREET/WARNER	2	59
HOT SHOT DEBUT		⑬	**Anxiety**	**Doechii**	DOECHII (J.J.M.HICKMON,W.DE BACKER,L.F.BONFA)	TOP DAWG/CAPITOL/ICLG	13	1
17	15	14	**I Had Some Help**	**Post Malone Featuring Morgan Wallen**	L.BELL,CHARLIE HANDSOME,HOSKINS (A.R.POST,M.C.WALLEN,L.B.BELL,CHARLIE HANDSOME,E.K.SMITH,J.J.HOSKINS,C.P.WALTERS,A.G.GORLEY)	MERCURY/BIG LOUD/REPUBLIC	1	44
⑭	⑬	15	**Love Somebody**	**Morgan Wallen**	J.MOI,CHARLIE HANDSOME (M.C.WALLEN,J.BYRON,A.G.GORLEY,J.K.HINDLIN,E.LOELV,CHARLIE HANDSOME,N.J.GALE,M.SORBARA,S.C.FRANK,S.F.R.MASTROIANNI,Y.GRUZMAN)	MERCURY/BIG LOUD/REPUBLIC	1	21
10	14	16	**Squabble Up**	**Kendrick Lamar**	KENDRICK LAMAR,SOUNWAVE,SCOTT BRIDGEWAY,J.M.ANTONOFF (K.L.DUCKWORTH,M.A.SPEARS,R.M.AKERS JR,J.M.ANTONOFF)	PGLANG/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	1	16
⑲	17	⑰	**I'm The Problem**	**Morgan Wallen**	J.MOI,CHARLIE HANDSOME (M.C.WALLEN,G.W.BLOCK,J.MCLAUGHLIN,E.K.SMITH,CHARLIE HANDSOME)	MERCURY/BIG LOUD/REPUBLIC	2	6
18	18	18	**Espresso**	**Sabrina Carpenter**	J.BUNETTA (S.A.CARPENTER,J.C.BUNETTA,A.R.ALLEN,S.N.JONES)	ISLAND/REPUBLIC	3	48
31	29	⑲	SAL STM **Abracadabra**	**Lady Gaga**	LADY GAGA,ANDREW WATT,CIRKUT (S.G.GERMANOTTA,A.WOTMAN,H.R.WALTER,S.J.BALLION,P.E.CLARKE,S.SEVERIN,J.MCGEE)	STREAMLINE/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	13	6
15	16	20	**30 For 30**	**SZA With Kendrick Lamar**	J WHITE DID IT,M.UZOWURU (S.I.ROWE,K.L.DUCKWORTH,J WHITE DID IT,M.UZOWURU,G.WILLIAMS,R.DEBARGE)	TOP DAWG/RCA	10	12

Go to the Chart Beat section of billboard.com for complete charts coverage.



JOHN JAY

HOT 100

13

"Anxiety"

Doechii

First released in 2019, Doechii's "Anxiety" blasts onto the Billboard Hot 100 at No. 13 thanks to its wide release at last, sparked by a 2023 reworking of the song and a viral surge (with an assist by Will Smith and Tatyana Ali).

The song by the rapper-singer — who will receive the 2025 Woman of the Year award at the annual Billboard Women in Music event on March 29 (see page 42) — enters with 20.6 million official U.S. streams, a 289% vault week over week (March 7-13), according to Luminate. Her highest-charting Hot 100 hit also becomes her first top 10 on Streaming Songs (No. 5 debut), the Billboard Global 200 (No. 6) and Billboard Global Excl. U.S. (No. 7). It drew 56.9 million streams and sold 9,000 worldwide in the tracking week.

When "Anxiety" was available only on YouTube, Brooklyn rapper Sleepy Hallow co-opted its hook for the chorus of his own track titled "ANXIETY." Billed to Sleepy Hallow featuring Doechii, that 2023 release has experienced a TikTok-led surge in recent weeks as users have soundtracked the "ANXIETY" chorus to a scene of Smith and Ali dancing on *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, the Smith-led sitcom that aired on NBC in 1990-96. "ANXIETY" debuted on the March 15-dated Hot 100 at No. 45 and ranks at No. 59 in its second week with 8.7 million streams. It also garnered 29.6 million streams worldwide March 7-13.

The new attention for "ANXIETY" sent fans to Doechii's solo, YouTube-only version, prompting her to release the original "Anxiety" wide on digital service providers and digital retailers on March 4, leading to its arrival on the March 22-dated charts following the first full week of its greater availability.

Notably, both "Anxiety" and "ANXIETY" prominently sample Gotye's "Somebody That I Used To Know" (featuring Kimbra), the smash that topped the Hot 100 for eight weeks in 2012 and won two Grammy Awards, including record of the year. That hit grew by 20% to 16.5 million global streams in the week ending March 13. It also debuts on the Hot Rock & Alternative Songs chart at No. 9 with 5.1 million U.S. streams (up 17%). Still in rotation at multiple radio formats, it additionally logged 3.9 million in airplay audience (up 16%). —TREVOR ANDERSON

HOT 100 FIRST-TIMERS

Artists who have recently made their initial appearances on the chart

ARTIST	SONG	DEBUT POSITION	DEBUT DATE
Alemán	**"Te Quería Ver,"** with Netón Vega	100	March 22

AIRPLAY, SALES AND STREAMING DATA COMPILED BY LUMINATE

BILLBOARD HOT 100: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR CURRENT SONGS ACROSS ALL GENRES, RANKED BY STREAMING ACTIVITY DATA BY ONLINE MUSIC SOURCES TRACKED BY LUMINATE, RADIO AIRPLAY AUDIENCE IMPRESSIONS AS MEASURED BY LUMINATE AND SALES DATA AS COMPILED BY LUMINATE. SEE CHARTS LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2025 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND LUMINATE INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

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Independent Artist Group

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Marsha Vlasic

Billboard Executive Of The Year

Lila Gerson
Becca Wilson

Women In Music Honorees

billboard Women in Music

BILLBOARD 200

27

Jason Isbell
FOXES IN THE SNOW

Jason Isbell
Foxes in the Snow

The singer-songwriter's first entirely solo acoustic album marks his seventh top 40-charting set on the Billboard 200 and his 10th top 10 on the Americana/Folk Albums ranking (No. 2 debut).

29

YOUNGBOY
MORE LEAKS
NEVER BROKE AGAIN

YoungBoy Never Broke Again
More Leaks

His latest entry marks his 34th charting release, all accrued since his first on the list in August 2017. In that span, only the Grateful Dead has logged more debuts on the chart, with 44.

37

Noah Kahan
Live From Fenway Park

Previously available only as a digital download and streaming set, a physical release of the album in three vinyl variants on March 7 prompts its reentry and first week in the top 40.

7

Jennie
Ruby

Jennie
Ruby

Jennie's first solo studio album, *Ruby*, enters at No. 7 on the Billboard 200, marking the Blackpink member's debut entry on the list as a soloist. The set launches with 56,000 equivalent album units earned in the United States in the week ending March 13, according to Luminate. It also arrives at No. 2 on Top Album Sales with 26,500 of its first-week units coming from album purchases.

Jennie is the third member of Blackpink, following Lisa and Rosé, to notch a solo top 10 on the chart — and all of them did so in the last three months. The last all-female group to spin off at least three soloists with their own top 10s was Destiny's Child (with Beyoncé, LeToya Luckett and Kelly Rowland all scoring individual top 10s). Other groups that have had at least three solo members accomplish the feat include BTS, The Beatles, N.W.A, One Direction and Wu-Tang Clan. —KEITH CAULFIELD

Billboard 200

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Artist IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL	Title	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
HOT SHOT DEBUT		①	**#1 for 1 WEEK** **Lady Gaga** STREAMLINE/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	**MAYHEM**	1	1
3	1	2	**Kendrick Lamar** PGLANG/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	**GNX**	1	16
2	2	3	**PARTYNEXTDOOR & Drake** OVO SOUND/REPUBLIC/SANTA ANNA	**$ome $exy $ongs 4 U**	1	4
4	4	4	**SZA** TOP DAWG/RCA	**SOS**	1	118
①	3	5	**Tate McRae** RCA	**So Close To What**	1	3
5	5	6	**Sabrina Carpenter** ISLAND/REPUBLIC	**Short n' Sweet**	1	29
NEW		⑦	**JENNIE** OA ENTERTAINMENT/COLUMBIA	**Ruby**	7	1
6	6	8	**Bad Bunny** RIMAS	**Debi Tirar Mas Fotos**	1	10
9	⑨	⑨	**Morgan Wallen** BIG LOUD/MERCURY/REPUBLIC	**One Thing At A Time**	1	106
8	8	10	**Chappell Roan** KRA/AMUSEMENT/ISLAND/REPUBLIC	**The Rise And Fall Of A Midwest Princess**	2	51
10	11	11	**Billie Eilish** DARKROOM/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	**Hit Me Hard And Soft**	2	43
7	10	12	**The Weeknd** XO/REPUBLIC	**Hurry Up Tomorrow**	1	6
⑮	⑫	⑬	**Morgan Wallen** BIG LOUD/REPUBLIC	**Dangerous: The Double Album**	1	218
11	13	14	**Gracie Abrams** INTERSCOPE/ICLG	**The Secret Of Us**	2	38
21	23	⑮	**Doechii** TOP DAWG/CAPITOL/ICLG	**Alligator Bites Never Heal**	14	15
12	14	16	**Taylor Swift** REPUBLIC	**The Tortured Poets Department**	1	47
13	15	17	**Noah Kahan** MERCURY/REPUBLIC	**Stick Season**	2	120
⑯	16	18	**Post Malone** MERCURY/REPUBLIC	**The Diamond Collection**	11	68
⑲	20	19	**Neton Vega** JOSA	**Mi Vida Mi Muerte**	19	3
14	18	20	**Tyler, The Creator** COLUMBIA	**CHROMAKOPIA**	1	20

SALES AND STREAMING DATA COMPILED BY LUMINATE

BILLBOARD 200: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR ALBUMS, BASED ON MULTIMETRIC CONSUMPTION, BLENDING TRADITIONAL ALBUM SALES, STREAMING-EQUIVALENT ALBUMS AND TRACK-EQUIVALENT ALBUMS, AS COMPILED BY LUMINATE. SEE CHARTS LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2025 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND LUMINATE INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

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Lauren Caire
VP

Kate McMahon
EVP

Rachel Powers
VP

THEY'RE OUT OF THIS WORLD!

MTG
MESSINA TOURING GROUP

ARTIST 100

2

KENDRICK LAMAR

WEEKS ON CHART

480

As Lamar and SZA's "Luther" tops the Billboard Hot 100 for a fourth week, the former sets a new career best for his longest stay at No. 1 among his six leaders. He previously reigned for three weeks each with "Not Like Us" (between last May and this February) and "Like That," with Future and Metro Boomin (April 2024).

—GARY TRUST

NO. 17

Jelly's On A Chart Roll

Jelly Roll's "Liar" tops the Country Airplay chart for a fifth consecutive and total week, becoming the Nashville native's sole longest-leading hit on the list. The song breaks out of a tie with "Need a Favor," which ruled for four weeks starting in August 2023. All seven of his entries have reached No. 1, with four tallying multiple-week commands. "Liar," co-written by Jelly Roll, Ashley Gorley, Ben Johnson and Taylor Phillips, is from his studio set *Beautifully Broken*, which arrived as his first No. 1 on both Top Country Albums and the Billboard 200 last October.

—JIM ASKER

NO. 28

Spiritbox Storms In

Spiritbox earns its second No. 1 on the Top Hard Rock Albums chart with the debut of *Tsunami Sea*. The set starts with 22,000 equivalent album units earned in the United States in the week ending March 13, according to Luminate. The band first topped the chart with *Eternal Blue* in October 2021. Concurrently, nine of *Tsunami Sea*'s 11 tracks reach the Hot Hard Rock Songs list, led by first single "Perfect Soul" at No. 9. The Courtney LaPlante-fronted group has the most concurrent appearances on the chart, which launched in 2020, by a woman or woman-led act.

—KEVIN RUTHERFORD

Artist 100

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Artist	IMPRINT/LABEL	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
15	17	①	**#1 for 7 WEEKS** **Lady Gaga**	STREAMLINE/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	1	310
2	1	2	**Kendrick Lamar**	PGLANG/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	1	480
4	2	3	**Morgan Wallen**	BIG LOUD/MERCURY/REPUBLIC	1	314
3	4	4	**Sabrina Carpenter**	ISLAND/REPUBLIC	1	67
5	5	5	**SZA**	TOP DAWG/RCA	1	289
6	6	6	**Drake**	OVO SOUND/REPUBLIC	1	557
7	9	7	**Chappell Roan**	KRA/AMUSEMENT/ISLAND/REPUBLIC	1	48
①	3	8	**Tate McRae**	RCA	1	127
8	7	9	**Billie Eilish**	DARKROOM/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	1	334
㉖	㉓	⑩	**Doechii**	TOP DAWG/CAPITOL	10	18
RE-ENTRY		⑪	**JENNIE**	OA ENTERTAINMENT/COLUMBIA	11	3
13	12	12	**Teddy Swims**	SWIMS INT./WARNER	3	79
10	10	13	**Bruno Mars**	ATLANTIC/AG	1	537
9	11	14	**The Weeknd**	XO/REPUBLIC	1	505
14	14	15	**Tyler, The Creator**	COLUMBIA	1	195
11	15	16	**Bad Bunny**	RIMAS	1	338
16	16	17	**Jelly Roll**	BAILEE & BUDDY/STONEY CREEK/BMG/REPUBLIC	1	139
12	13	18	**Taylor Swift**	REPUBLIC	1	555
51	53	⑲	**Noah Kahan**	MERCURY/REPUBLIC	6	92
21	21	20	**Luke Combs**	RIVER HOUSE/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/SMN	1	419

LAMAR: PGLANG. JELLY ROLL: ERIC RYAN ANDERSON. SPIRITBOX: JONATHAN WEINER.

AIRPLAY, SALES AND STREAMING DATA COMPILED BY LUMINATE

BILLBOARD ARTIST 100: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR ARTISTS ACROSS ALL GENRES, RANKED BY ALBUM AND TRACK SALES AS MEASURED BY LUMINATE, RADIO AIRPLAY AUDIENCE IMPRESSIONS AS MEASURED BY LUMINATE, STREAMING ACTIVITY DATA FROM ONLINE MUSIC SOURCES TRACKED BY LUMINATE. SEE CHARTS LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2025 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND LUMINATE INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

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NO. 1

TobyMac Back On Top With New Album

Singer-songwriter tobyMac debuts at No. 1 on the Top Christian Albums chart with *Heaven on My Mind*. In its first week (March 7-13), the full-length earned 10,000 equivalent album units in the United States, with 7,000 in album sales, according to Luminate.

The chart-topper marks tobyMac's seventh, among 13 top 10s, with the entirety of his leaders having started at the top of the list. The Fairfax, Va., native last reached No. 1 with *Life After Death* in August 2022. He first led with *(portable sounds)* in March 2007.

The new album's lead single, "Nothin' Sweeter," led Christian Airplay for a week last November, becoming tobyMac's 14th No. 1, the most among soloists in the chart's history. It reached No. 6 on the multimetric Hot Christian Songs ranking, marking his record-tying 30th top 10, as he matched the totals of MercyMe and Chris Tomlin.

—JIM ASKER

Top Christian Albums

LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Artist IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL	Title	WKS. ON CHART
HOT SHOT DEBUT	1	#1 for 1 WEEK **tobyMac** FOREFRONT/CAPITOL CMG	**Heaven On My Mind**	1
1	2	**Forrest Frank** RIVER HOUSE RECORDS/10K PROJECTS	**Child Of God**	33
2	3	**Elevation Worship** ELEVATION WORSHIP/PLG	**Can You Imagine?**	95
3	4	**Lauren Daigle** CENTRICITY/12TONE/WARNER	**Look Up Child**	340
4	5	**Josiah Queen** JOSIAH QUEEN	**The Prodigal**	42
5	6	**Maverick City Music, Chandler Moore & Naomi Raine** TRIBL	**The Maverick Way Complete: Complete Vol 02**	69
6	7	**Kanye West** G.O.O.D./DEF JAM/UME	**Donda**	185
7	8	**Elevation Worship** ELEVATION WORSHIP/PLG	**When Wind Meets Fire**	35
8	9	**CeCe Winans** PURESPRINGS GOSPEL/FAIR TRADE	**More Than This**	46
10	10	**Skillet** ARDENT/ATLANTIC/FAIR TRADE	**Awake**	565

NO. 1

GT_Ofice Notches First No. 1

GT_Ofice earns his first leader on a *Billboard* chart as "Someone Else" ascends a spot to No. 1 on Dance/Mix Show Airplay. The DJ-producer (real name: Caine Sheppard; the first three letters of his moniker stand for "Good Times Only") has charted four songs — all self-released — since 2023, reaching a previous No. 26 peak with "Every Thought of You" (with Alwz Snny). He also hit No. 30 with his other sole-billed entry, "Never Together."

"Someone Else" is receiving support on stations including Pulse Radio in San Francisco (over 850 plays, according to Mediabase), Pulse 87 in Hudson Valley, N.Y., (600) and Revolution 93.5 in Miami (550). "Dance radio has helped introduce me to listeners who might not be in the club or festival scene," GT_Ofice says. "I generally mix poppy vocals with dance pop beats. My sound is just a little different."

—GARY TRUST

Dance/Mix Show Airplay

LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL	Artist	WKS. ON CHART
2	1	#1 for 1 WEEK **Someone Else** CAINE	**GT_Ofice**	13
7	2	**I'm Going Out** DEJA VU RECORDS	**Steve Aoki & Sam Feldt & XANDRA (Nile Rodgers & Zak Abel)**	8
3	3	**Visions Of You** RESTLESS MINDS	**HAYLA**	13
4	4	**Heaven Knows** MONSTERCAT	**Kaskade & Punctual Featuring Poppy Baskcomb**	11
1	5	**Hypnotized** INTERSCOPE/ICLG	**Anyma & Ellie Goulding**	8
9	6	**Never Walk Alone** INSOMNIAC	**BLOND:ISH & Stevie Appleton**	8
10	7	**Into The Blue** SONG VAULT	**Will Sass & kamille**	8
6	8	**Tantalizing** MUSICAL FREEDOM/SPINNIN'	**Tiesto & Soaky Siren**	10
8	9	**Crash** ARMADA	**Loud Luxury**	5
13	10	**Crossfire** FSW/PALM TREE	**Frank Walker & Alexander Stewart**	12

TOBYMAC: ROBBY KLEIN. GT_OFICE: CAINE RECORDS.

AIRPLAY, SALES AND STREAMING DATA COMPILED BY LUMINATE

TOP CHRISTIAN ALBUMS: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR CHRISTIAN ALBUMS, BASED ON MULTIMETRIC CONSUMPTION, BLENDING TRADITIONAL ALBUM SALES, STREAMING-EQUIVALENT ALBUMS AND TRACK-EQUIVALENT ALBUMS, AS COMPILED BY LUMINATE. DANCE/MIX SHOW AIRPLAY: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR SONGS RANKED BY RADIO AIRPLAY DETECTIONS ON DANCE-FORMATTED STATIONS AND MIXSHOW PLAYS ON MAINSTREAM TOP 40 AND SELECT RHYTHMIC STATIONS THAT HAVE SUBMITTED HOURS OF MIXSHOW PROGRAMMING, AS MEASURED BY MEDIABASE AND PROVIDED BY LUMINATE. STATIONS ARE ELECTRONICALLY MONITORED 24 HOURS A DAY, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK. SEE CHARTS LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2025 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND LUMINATE INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

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CARRIE A. PAGLINCO

THANYA VALDEZ

Billboard Women in Music Executive Honorees

Photo credit: John Jay

Coldplay in Brooklyn in 2024.

DIMITRIOS KAMBOURIS/GETTY IMAGES

COLDPLAY RUNS THE WORLD

The *Music of the Spheres* world tour adds to its record-setting attendance with shows in the United Arab Emirates and India

BY THE END OF 2024, Coldplay's *Music of the Spheres* world tour had become the best-selling outing in history, with 11 legs across five continents. Now it rules Billboard Boxscore's January recap by breaking new ground with its first shows in India.

Coldplay grossed $56.6 million and sold 590,000 tickets over nine shows in the first month of 2025, according to figures reported to Boxscore. It's the sixth time the band has led Top Tours, continuing a cat-and-mouse chase into the record books for the most times leading the ranking.

In November, Coldplay scored its fifth win, breaking a three-way tie with Beyoncé and Trans-Siberian Orchestra. Then, after TSO headlined Top Tours in December, Coldplay inched its six victory in January. With a packed schedule from April through September, the band is set to match Bad Bunny's and Elton John's shared record of seven times leading Top Tours, before TSO begins its annual holiday run.

The January leg of Coldplay's tour began with four shows in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, which earned $28 million from 203,000 tickets — more than six times the numbers from the band's previous trip to the UAE, in 2016. Later in January, two performances at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, India, became the most-attended stadium shows of the 21st century. With 112,000 tickets sold on both Jan. 25 and Jan. 26, Coldplay narrowly bypassed George Strait's 111,000 in Texas last June.

—ERIC FRANKENBERG

Top Tours

	Artist	Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1	**Coldplay**	$56.6M	590K	9
2	**Luke Combs**	$30.3M	233K	5
3	**Seventeen**	$28.8M	132K	4
4	**Eagles**	$18.7M	65.6K	4
5	**Justin Timberlake**	$10.5M	76.4K	7
6	**ATEEZ**	$10.5M	64K	6
7	**André Rieu**	$7.8M	88.2K	9
8	**ENHYPEN**	$7.7M	76K	2
9	**Amyna**	$7.5M	52.3K	3
10	**Kelsea Ballerini**	$7.1M	64.4K	6

Top Boxscores

	Artist(s) VENUE DATE	Gross TICKET PRICES	Total Attendance NO. OF SHOWS	Promoter(s)
1	**Coldplay** ZAYED SPORTS CITY STADIUM, ABU DHABI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES JAN. 9, 11-12, 14	**$28.1M** $406.97/$20.14	**203K** 4	Live Nation
2	**Seventeen** NATIONAL STADIUM, SINGAPORE JAN. 25-26	**$15.9M** $286.28/$123.96	**74K** 2	HYBE
3	**Coldplay** NARENDRA MODI STADIUM, AHMEDABAD, INDIA JAN. 25-26	**$15.7M** $347.76/$23.18	**224K** 2	Live Nation
4	**Luke Combs** SUNCORP STADIUM, BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA JAN. 24-25	**$14.1M** $376.43/$15.69	**94.5K** 2	Frontier Touring
5	**Coldplay** DY PATIL STADIUM, MUMBAI, INDIA JAN. 18, 20-21	**$12.8M** $404.18/$23.10	**164K** 3	Live Nation
6	**Seventeen** PHILIPPINE SPORTS STADIUM, BULACAN, PHILIPPINES JAN. 18, 20-21	**$12.8M** $341.53/$99.92	**57.6K** 3	HYBE
7	**Eagles** SPHERE, LAS VEGAS JAN. 17-18	**$9.4M** $311/$120	**32.8K** 2	Live Nation
8	**Eagles** SPHERE, LAS VEGAS JAN. 24-25	**$9.4M** $373.54/$15.57	**32.8K** 2	Live Nation
9	**Luke Combs** ACCOR STADIUM, SYDNEY JAN. 31	**$9.2M** $373.54/$15.57	**69.1K** 1	Frontier Touring
10	**ENHYPEN** KYOCERA DOME, OSAKA, JAPAN JAN. 25-26	**$7.7M** $173.04/$89.72	**76K** 2	HYBE Japan

Top Venues

15,001 OR MORE CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1	**Sphere** LAS VEGAS	$26.2M	118K	7
2	**O2 Arena** LONDON	$8.7M	105K	16
3	**Madison Square Garden** NEW YORK	$7.3M	114K	7
4	**American Airlines Center** DALLAS	$5.2M	55K	4
5	**Barclays Center** BROOKLYN	$2.5M	51.7K	10
6	**Ball Arena** DENVER	$2.3M	20K	2
7	**Honda Center** ANAHEIM, CALIF.	$2M	12.6K	1
8	**Bell Centre** MONTREAL	$2M	29.6K	8
9	**AO Arena** MANCHESTER, ENGLAND	$1.9M	11.8K	1
10	**LDLC Arena** LYON, FRANCE	$1.8M	10.9K	1

Kelsea Ballerini

Justin Timberlake

10,001-15,000 CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1	**Dickies Arena** FORT WORTH, TEXAS	$6.6M	145K	16
2	**Barclays Arena** HAMBURG, GERMANY	$5.7M	101K	14
3	**Footprint Center** PHOENIX	$3.4M	30K	3
4	**Utilita Arena** NEWCASTLE, ENGLAND	$3.1M	42.3K	9
5	**Moody Center** AUSTIN	$2.9M	36.3K	5
6	**OVO Hydro** GLASGOW	$2.6M	40.4K	6
7	**Van Andel Arena** GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.	$1.7M	32.8K	5
8	**Hallenstadion** ZURICH	$1.6M	9.6K	1
9	**Unipol Arena** BOLOGNA, ITALY	$1.6M	9.5K	1
10	**Acrisure Arena** PALM DESERT, CALIF.	$1.3M	9.3K	1

5,001-10,000 CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1	**Radio City Music Hall** NEW YORK	$13.2M	119K	22
2	**Hordern Pavilion** SYDNEY	$2.7M	41.2K	8
3	**The Anthem** WASHINGTON, D.C.	$2.4M	30.8K	7
4	**Auditorio Telmex** GUADALAJARA, MEXICO	$1.7M	20.1K	3
5	**Auditorio Nacional** MEXICO CITY	$1.5M	34.1K	4
6	**Aware Super Theatre** SYDNEY	$1.4M	18.6K	3
7	**Texas Trust CU Theatre** DALLAS	$1.3M	16K	5
8	**Riverstage** BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA	$1.2M	18.2K	3
9	**Sirromet Winery** BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA	$1M	11.6K	2
10	**Bimbadgen Estate** HUNTER VALLEY, AUSTRALIA	$732K	8.5K	2

2,501-5,000 CAPACITY

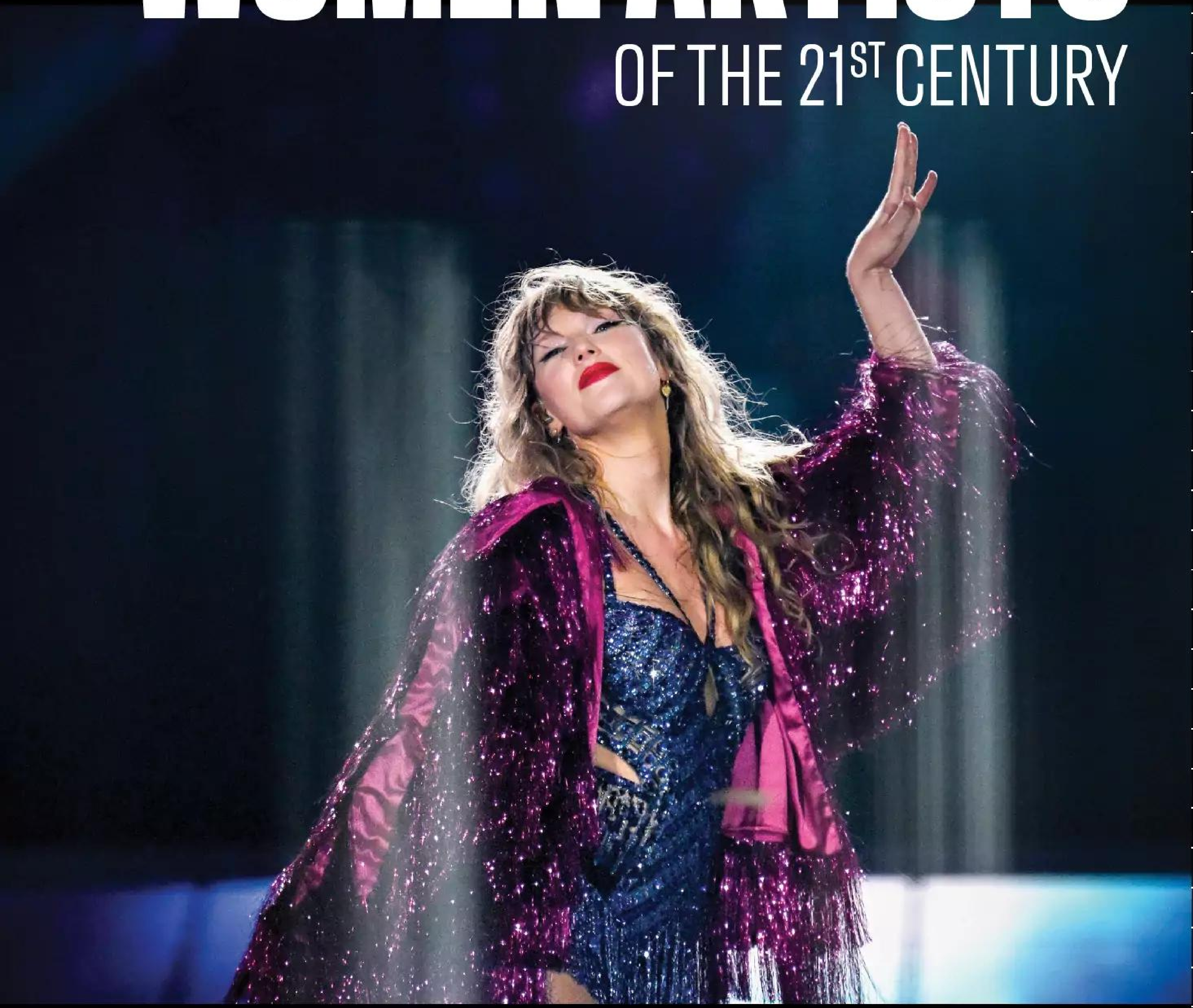
	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1	**Broward Center for the Performing Arts, Au-Rene Theater** FORT LAUDERDALE, FLA.	$4.8M	49.4K	25
2	**Fox Theatre** ATLANTA	$4.3M	51.9K	13
3	**David A. Straz Jr. Center for the Performing Arts, Morsani Hall** TAMPA, FLA.	$2.7M	32.8K	18
4	**Providence Performing Arts Center** PROVIDENCE, R.I.	$2.3M	24K	8
5	**Chicago Theatre** CHICAGO	$2.3M	20.8K	6
6	**Altria Theater** RICHMOND, VA.	$2.3M	27.7K	9
7	**Fox Theatre** DETROIT	$2.1M	14.1K	3
8	**Shrine Expo Hall** LOS ANGELES	$1.8M	27K	9
9	**Beacon Theatre** NEW YORK	$1.4M	18.5K	7
10	**Shea's Performing Arts Center** BUFFALO, N.Y.	$1.3M	10.8K	4

2,500 OR LESS CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1	**Encore Theater at Wynn Las Vegas** LAS VEGAS	$4M	22.8K	16
2	**DeVos Performance Hall** GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.	$2.1M	26.9K	13
3	**Metronom Theater** OBERHAUSEN, GERMANY	$1.5M	21.6K	22
4	**Deutsches Theater** MUNICH	$1.2M	33.2K	28
5	**Parker Playhouse** FORT LAUDERDALE, FLA.	$1.1M	15.4K	19
6	**Theater 11** ZURICH	$1.1M	13.2K	16
7	**Olympia Theatre** DUBLIN	$923K	26.2K	20
8	**Teatro Telcel** MEXICO CITY	$905K	14.2K	12
9	**Enmore Theatre** SYDNEY	$838K	14.5K	8
10	**Ryman Auditorium** NASHVILLE	$700K	4.5K	2

BALLERINI: JASON KEMPIN/GETTY IMAGES. TIMBERLAKE: KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES.

TOP WOMEN ARTISTS OF THE 21ST CENTURY



POSITION / ARTIST	
1	Taylor Swift
2	Rihanna
3	Beyoncé
4	Adele
5	Katy Perry
6	Lady Gaga
7	P!nk
8	Ariana Grande
9	Miley Cyrus
10	Alicia Keys
11	Kelly Clarkson
12	Mariah Carey
13	Carrie Underwood
14	Britney Spears
15	Billie Eilish
16	Nicki Minaj
17	Destiny's Child
18	SZA
19	Avril Lavigne
20	Christina Aguilera
21	Olivia Rodrigo
22	Jennifer Lopez
23	Mary J. Blige
24	Doja Cat
25	Dua Lipa
26	Kesha
27	Cardi B
28	Fergie
29	Ashanti
30	Selena Gomez
31	Norah Jones
32	Gwen Stefani
33	Meghan Trainor
34	The Chicks
35	Faith Hill
36	Madonna
37	Halsey
38	Ciara
39	Evanescence
40	Missy Elliott
41	Janet Jackson
42	Lizzo
43	Nelly Furtado
44	Lorde
45	Shakira
46	Sugarland
47	Aaliyah
48	Céline Dion
49	The Pussycat Dolls
50	Sabrina Carpenter

GARETH CATTERMOLE/TAS24/GETTY IMAGES

QUARTER-CENTURY QUEEN:

Taylor Swift Tops The Chart

THIS IS A SONG CALLED 'Tim McGraw,' " Taylor Swift told staffers in the kitchenette of *Billboard*'s New York office in 2006. Before starting to strum her debut hit, the then-16-year-old added, "This is a song that's on your charts right now."

Following hundreds more charted songs across the next two decades, Swift crowns *Billboard*'s Top Women Artists of the 21st Century retrospective. Her achievements include many a historical feat as well: Her 14 No. 1 albums on the Billboard 200 tie her for the most among soloists; with her latest, 2024 album *The Tortured Poets Department*, she claimed each of the top 14 titles on the Billboard Hot 100 dated May 4, 2024. (The set debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 the same week.)

Along the way, while segueing from country star to pop titan, Swift ruled *Billboard*'s Top Artists chart in 2009, 2015, 2023 and 2024 — becoming the first artist with four such titles since the category launched in 1981.

—GARY TRUST

Billboard's Top Women Artists of the 21st Century chart reflects performance on weekly charts dated Jan. 1, 2000, through Dec. 28, 2024. (Titles released prior to mid-1999, including holiday fare, are excluded, although such entries contribute to the calculation of the recap.) The category ranks the best-performing solo women, all-women acts and groups with prominent women's vocals in that span based on activity on the Billboard 200 and the Billboard Hot 100.

23 MARY J. BLIGE

Dubbed The Queen of Hip-Hop Soul, Mary J. Blige reshaped the boundaries of a classic sound, marrying soul's pained heartbreak and pursuits of love with streetwise, autobiographical storytelling that resonated with a rap-raised generation.

From the jump, Blige connected with audiences, landing four top 10 albums on the Billboard 200 and 17 Billboard Hot 100 hits — including three top 10s — in the 1990s. In the 21st century, her brand peaked with two massive hits: Her first Hot 100 No. 1, 2001's thumping, Dr. Dre-produced "Family Affair," with lyrics that introduced "hateration," "holleration" and "dancery" to many vocabularies, and "Be Without You," a romantic ode that spent a then-record 15 weeks at No. 1 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart in 2006.

Big as they were, they weren't the only crown jewels in her royal collection, as Blige notched 26 Hot 100 hits and 11 top 10 Billboard 200 albums in total in the first quarter of the century.

—TREVOR ANDERSON

60 DIDO

A year after the release of Dido's 1999 debut album, *No Angel*, the English singer-songwriter found herself with a perhaps unexpected collaborator: Eminem. The rapper heavily sampled "Thank You" — a song from *No Angel* that also appears on the soundtrack to the 1998 film *Sliding Doors* — on his single "Stan." He gave her featured artist credit on the track and she co-starred in its official video. Dido then released "Thank You" as a single in September 2000 and broke into the Billboard Hot 100 top 10, reaching No. 3 in April 2001.

While "Stan" reached a modest Hot 100 peak of No. 51 in December 2000 (and hit No. 36 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs), its legacy is far-reaching. The title became slang for a fervent fan, based on its titular subject — and the name of Dido's son, born in 2011. In 2013, she told *Billboard*, "I first heard about 'Stan' when I was in a hotel in New York. I got a letter saying, 'We heard your track. We love it. We'd like to use it for this track "Stan." Can you take a listen?' I was a big Eminem fan, so it was pretty cool. And then I heard it. I had some friends staying in the same hotel. They were literally running down the hall, like, 'You have to listen to this — it's just brilliant!' "

—G.T.

51	**Camila Cabello**
52	**Demi Lovato**
53	**Sheryl Crow**
54	**Colbie Caillat**
55	**Sia**
56	**Miranda Lambert**
57	**Leona Lewis**
58	**Keyshia Cole**
59	**No Doubt**
60	**Dido**
61	**Enya**
62	**Ellie Goulding**
63	**Megan Thee Stallion**
64	**Sara Bareilles**
65	**Jessica Simpson**
66	**Shania Twain**
67	**Eve**
68	**Natasha Bedingfield**
69	**Whitney Houston**
70	**Iggy Azalea**
71	**Lana Del Rey**
72	**Amy Winehouse**
73	**Hilary Duff**
74	**Gretchen Wilson**
75	**Carly Rae Jepsen**
76	**Susan Boyle**
77	**Jordin Sparks**
78	**Ashlee Simpson**
79	**Martina McBride**
80	**Chappell Roan**
81	**Fleetwood Mac**
82	**The Band Perry**
83	**Michelle Branch**
84	**Alessia Cara**
85	**Summer Walker**
86	**Reba McEntire**
87	**Keri Hilson**
88	**Barbra Streisand**
89	**Mýa**
90	**Bebe Rexha**
91	**Paramore**
92	**Lil' Kim**
93	**Brenda Lee**
94	**Toni Braxton**
95	**Charli xcx**
96	**Sade**
97	**Fifth Harmony**
98	**Fantasia**
99	**Vanessa Carlton**
100	**Danity Kane**

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THE MLC CELEBRATES

WOMEN IN MUSIC

Saluting the Women of The MLC – Making History Every Day

CONGRATULATIONS TO JAMIE DOMINGUEZ, NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRY RELATIONS, AND ALL OF *BILLBOARD*'S 2025 WOMEN IN MUSIC HONOREES!

Abby Cummings | AJ Beaver | Alayna Nelson | Allie Anderson
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Ashlyn Murphy | Ava Swanson | Baylee Kuss | Beth Bailey
Bethany Dillingham | Cameryn Conner | Case Scally
Darian Gonzalez | Deidre O'Grady | Dorinda Harper
Elise DeJarnatt | Ellen Truley | Emily Boardman | Emma Gillis
Emma Iacovino | Erika Valencia | Erin Jarvis | Erin Horton
Faith Lei | Hannah Pyeatt | Heather Buresh | Helena Cook
Ilene Weintraub | Indi Chawla | Isabelle Talledo | Jaden Smith
Jamie Dominguez | Jane Bushmaker | Jess Dorow
Jessica Carmack | Jolie Sarro | Jordan Todd | Joya Carmichael
Julianna Banks | Kat Albert | Katelynn Dickhens | Kathy Lee
Katie Adams | Katrina Feyintola | Kayla Ott | Kelly Forsha
Krystal Ribble | Lacy Perry | Lauren Neiner | Leah Hudson
Leigh McCorkle | Lindsey Major | Liz Mayo | Madeline Miller
Malvina Bhatia-Guerin | Mara Hines | Margaret Eggers
Margaret Jones | Maria Brannon | Marilyn Gutierrez
Megan Mossman | Michelle Reed | Millie Dantin | Miriam Koch
Monique Benjamin | Morgan Hall | Nadia Huber | Nancy Prescott
Nia Blair | Olivia Binczewski | Serona Elton | Sharnett Gordon
Sonya McKinley | Susanne Hines | Sydney Evans | Sydney Mitchell
Taylor Hauser | Taylor John | Trang Adara | Truth Chiles
Vic Hackett | Yamile Tasso

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PG. 28 MUSIC'S DEI DOWNTURN
PG. 30 PUERTO RICO'S BAD BUNNY BUMP
PG. 32 BIZ 3'S FRAZIER ON SELF-CARE

Licensing Deals Put Artists In The Driver's Seat

An increasing number of acts are limiting labels' ownership of their recordings to 15 years or less. Is that sustainable for the recording industry?

BY ELIAS LEIGHT // ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERTO MIRANDA

IN 1997, DAVID BOWIE DID something unusual: Rather than sign a standard recording contract, he entered into a licensing agreement with EMI America. Under the terms of the deal, the label would have the rights to more than two dozen of the star's albums for 15 years, but after that period, those rights reverted to Bowie. "For 99% of the artists on the roster, the label owned the recordings in perpetuity," says Tim Mandelbaum, an entertainment attorney who once worked at EMI.

Those types of deals are no longer atypical: Over the last five years, artists are increasingly demanding license deals at the start of their career. "If I have an artist with a couple of different labels that are interested, it's fairly easy for them to retain copyright," says Craig Averill, a music lawyer.

How this relatively recent shift will affect major labels' business in the long term remains unclear. Owning artists' recordings in perpetuity enabled record companies to amass large catalogs, which gave them immense power in subsequent music licensing negotiations — with streaming services, for example. "These labels were built on owning these copyrights," says Larry Katz, who has spent more than 30 years practicing law in the music industry. "The model going forward is they're basically renting music for a license period."

"How sustainable is that over time?" Mandelbaum wonders. "What does that mean for the continuing growth of the catalogs that have enabled the majors to remain dominant?"

Songs released in the last five years accounted for nearly 50% of on-demand streams in the United States in 2024, according to Luminate's year-end report. So, presumably, a solid chunk of those tracks could soon revert to the artists who made them.

The length of the license varies according to how much leverage the artist has. In many cases, "labels will try to get at least 20 years," according to Carron Mitchell, a partner at Nixon Peabody.

But if a label wants an act badly, it will make an exception. Loren Wells, a partner at Wells & Kappel, recently fielded a 10-year license as an opening bid from a major label that hoped to win over one of his clients. Another music attorney, Audrey Benoualid, says she tries to keep a license "below 10 years if I can."

The license period often kicks in nine to 12

Hipgnosis was renamed **Recognition Music Group**, bringing three previously separate Hipgnosis companies under one management team.

Rimas Entertainment acquired a stake in Argentine label **Dale Play Records**.

Create Music Group acquired the recording and publishing catalogs of **deadmau5** and label **mau5trap** in a deal valued at $55 million.

Artone acquired U.K. physical distributor **Proper Music Group**.

months after the act releases its final album under the agreement. If it takes the artist five years to turn in the three records the artist owes the label, for example, the clock on the license doesn't start counting down until around year six. This is still a significant improvement over a perpetuity deal. Under the U.S. Copyright Act, artists who signed away their recordings for life get a chance to regain those right in the United States after 35 years.

Licensing deals come with another caveat: The rights only revert to the artist if they recoup their expenses. Depending on the deal they negotiated, though, "they may be able to buy themselves out," says Ray Garcia, a partner at Rimon Law, "either by paying off the unrecouped balance or 110% or 120% of what's unrecouped."

Labels also have ways of holding on to recordings for longer. "They'll try to build in options where they can relicense the rights for five or 10 more years by paying an advance equal to several years' worth of net profits," music lawyer Jonathan Altschul says. Labels also try to insert "matching rights" into the initial deal, according to Josh Binder, a partner at Rothenberg Mohr & Binder, "so that whatever the artist's next deal is, the original label gets a chance to match it."

The major labels' business has changed significantly in recent years, and it's possible that the shift toward licensing deals might not matter much to them. "These are public companies now, and their duty is to their shareholders," Wells explains. "Quarterly earnings reports have outsize importance. If that means licensing the track for 10 years [to boost those earnings], sure — whatever it takes to keep shareholders happy."

> "These labels were built on owning these copyrights. The model going forward is they're basically renting music for a license period."
>
> —LARRY KATZ

While songs released in the last five years accounted for nearly 50% of on-demand streams in the United States in 2024, that trend has been relatively constant since 2020. And during that period, tracks that were released in the last 15 years make up close to 80% of on-demand U.S. streams. If this pattern holds, attorneys say labels will still hold sway over most premier artists' catalogs during their peak streaming years.

And it's often easier for a star to re-up a license and continue to work with the team that is already managing the artist's music, paying out producers and songwriters. Moving a catalog "is a gigantic pain" for an artist, "and some inefficiencies and loss of income occur during that switchover," Mandelbaum says. On top of that, he points out that the incumbent label can sweeten a license extension by, for example, improving the artist's cut of profits on music the artist has already released.

In a license-happy world, Altschul predicts the recorded side of the music business may start to look more like the music publishing industry. "We saw a wave of acquisitions in publishing over the last three to five years," he says. "In many cases, that was because artists had either retained partial ownership of their publishing catalogs or had gotten reversions.

"I suspect that 10 or 15 years down the line, we may see that happen more with recorded music," Altschul adds. "Labels will have to write big checks to reacquire the rights."

WOMEN RULE THE CHARTS BUT WHITE MEN RUN THE INDUSTRY

The latest Annenberg Inclusion Initiative study found that there has been no increase in the percentage of women and people of color in senior executive roles

THE LANDSCAPE for top music executives remains overwhelmingly white and male, according to a new report by the University of Southern California's Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, which notes that representation at the highest levels of the industry has remained minimal despite dedications to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) by major music companies in 2020 — with many of them, particularly in streaming, performing worse today than when data was last collected in 2021.

On March 12, Dr. Stacy L. Smith and the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative released their second Inclusion in the Music Business report — in partnership with Believe and TuneCore — that focuses on the gender and racial/ethnic identity of music executives, with data pulled from a survey of 2,793 executives from 106 music companies.

In one key finding, 86.8% of top executives (i.e., CEOs and presidents) at a subset of 37 major and independent music companies were men, while 92.1% were white. All three nonwhite executives, two of whom were women of color, ran independent companies.

"Much has been made of the 'Year of the Woman' in music, highlighting the work of artists like Taylor Swift, Beyoncé, Chappell Roan or Sabrina Carpenter," the report reads. "While the music stage may be perceived as increasingly open to women artists, the executive ranks have maintained the status quo."

The report adds, "In comparison to 2021, there was no increase in the percentage of senior executives who were women, people of color, or women of color in these roles — in fact, the percentage of underrepresented top executives decreased."

At six major music companies surveyed (Universal Music Group, Sony Music Entertainment, Warner Music Group, Spotify, iHeartMedia and SiriusXM), the report discovered that just one-third of all senior management executives were women, while 16.7% were from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group. In total, there were just eight women of color working in those roles, amounting to 10.3%.

Among all companies surveyed, the presence of women executives falls significantly as the level of responsibility increases. Women are most likely to hold positions at the vp/head level at 43.9%. The percentage drops to 38.1% of executive vp/senior vp/GM roles and falls to 25.6% at the chief/president position.

8

WOMEN OF COLOR HOLD SENIOR MANAGEMENT POSITIONS

at the six major music companies surveyed by the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.

A similar pattern emerged for underrepresented executives, who make up 25.9% of vp/head roles but only 19.7% and 21% of executive vp/senior vp/GM and chief/president roles, respectively. Only 10% of all executives in these categories were women of color.

Smith and her team also broke down their findings by five sectors: music groups, record labels, publishing, streaming and music distribution.

The music distribution sector has the highest percentage of women executives (47.8%), which is significantly greater than the other four sectors. Women fill 39.4% of executive positions at record labels, 38.3% at music groups, 37.6% in publishing and 37.2% in streaming.

For women of color, the hurdles to reach the upper echelons of leadership remain the highest. Among the subset of 37 music companies, a mere 5.3% of the highest-ranked executives and 10.3% of senior management teams are women of color. Record labels (13.4%) were significantly more likely than music distribution (9.9%), streaming (7.5%) and publishing (6.9%) to be inclusive.

"The lack of women of color in leadership roles stands in contrast to the strong showing of women of color as artists and songwriters over the past several years," the report states. "Clearly the music industry values women of color — but not the ways that women of color lead."

Among the actions that the report recommends for change is the use of specific and measurable criteria in the hiring, evaluation and promotion process.

"The music industry has faced a difficult season with layoffs across multiple companies," the report states. "Additionally, the wider cultural moment is dismissive or even hostile to so-called DEI initiatives, creating wariness or even abandonment of principles and activities designed to cultivate and foster talent. Despite these challenges, the music business need not forego adopting strategies that will allow for the most qualified employees to rise to positions of greater responsibility and leadership, no matter their identity."

—TAYLOR MIMS

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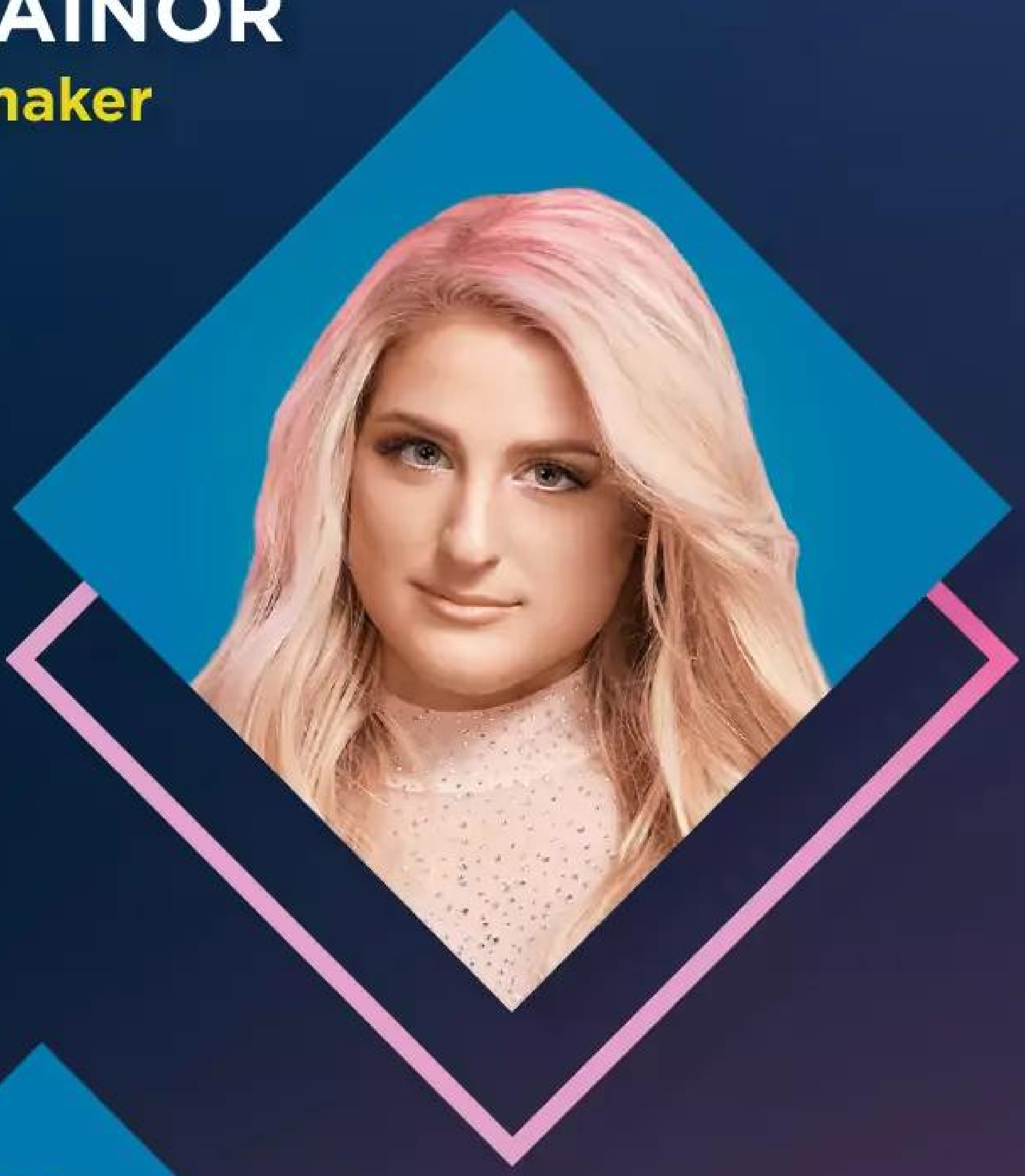

MUNI LONG
Rising Star

TYLA
Impact

Duetti secured $200 million from a group of banks led by **Truist** to finance catalog acquisitions and more.

Concord is in advanced talks to acquire music distributor **Stem**.

BAD BUNNY PUMPS UP PUERTO RICO'S ECONOMY

Hotel reservations and Airbnb rentals are surging in anticipation of the Latin superstar's 30-date residency during his homeland's slow season

BY ISABELA RAYGOZA

Bad Bunny onstage at the Coliseo in 2024.

GLADYS VEGA/GETTY IMAGES

THIS SUMMER, BAD BUNNY is set to transform Puerto Rico's typically quiet concert season with a 30-show residency at the Coliseo de Puerto Rico José Miguel Agrelot (aka El Choli). Choosing not to tour globally, the Puerto Rican superstar will instead showcase his latest album, *DeBÍ TiRAR MáS FOToS*, which topped multiple all-genre *Billboard* charts, exclusively on his home turf from July 11 to Sept. 14. And the extraordinary demand for tickets — 400,000 sold in four hours, half of them to international tourists, according to Alejandro Pabón, the Move Concerts promoter behind the residency — all but guarantees Bad Bunny's run will boost the local economy.

Although the 18,000-capacity Coliseo has hosted multiple back-to-back shows in the past, the length of Bad Bunny's residency and its international appeal have never been seen before in Puerto Rico.

Pabón details the effect on Puerto Rico's economy that 200,000 ticketholders from abroad is already having: "All the hotels are sold out," he says, adding that a local newspaper reported a 70% surge in Airbnb rentals during the residency dates. He also notes that the residency and the influx of tourists it will bring will create job opportunities for local residents.

"The fact that they're doing this in July and August is going to be a huge win for the island because nobody's there at those times [due to the heat]," says travel/concierge expert Rob DelliBovi, founder and CEO of Miami-based RDB Hospitality. At a time when he estimates hotel occupancy to be 30% to 40%, "it'll be like 90% because of all these shows."

The residency should also vault the Coliseo to a new level of success. On *Billboard*'s year-end 2024 Top Venues chart (15,001-plus capacity), the Coliseo ranked at No. 39 with a gross of $52.5 million and 750,000 tickets sold.

Coliseo GM Jorge L. Pérez says he expects the residency to help the venue set a sales record. He projects total 2025 tickets sold will top 1.3 million and the number of shows it hosts to exceed 100 — both records. Because of Bad Bunny's residency, he says there's potential for the Coliseo to place among the top five on *Billboard*'s year-end Top Venues chart.

The building has established itself as a rite of passage for Latin pop superstars. Situated in the heart of San Juan's Milla de Oro, a sold-out performance there is an affirmation of star power.

As a result, the venue has hosted many record-breaking events — many of them set by Bad Bunny. In March 2019 and July 2022, he broke Metallica's 2010 record for the fastest-selling concert at the Coliseo. In 2019, Daddy Yankee broke Wisin & Yandel's record for the most consecutive sold-out shows there (10) during his Con Calma Pa'l Choli tour, and Bad Bunny is now poised to sail past that number as well. One record he can't break: In 2021, Karol G became the first international female artist to set the mark for the fastest ticket sales at the venue with two sold-out dates.

> "We're doing this not just for business. This is done for our country, for our identity, because we really love Puerto Rico."
> —ALEJANDRO PABÓN, MOVE CONCERTS

Pérez says that when Pabón and Bad Bunny's manager, Noah Assad, unveiled the concept of the residency to him, "I was blown away," and he agreed to keep their plans under wraps. "When they started working the room blocks, I got calls from a lot of skeptical hoteliers," he recalls. "They were like, 'Why are they asking for so many rooms? What is happening?' I was like, 'I can't reveal that information. Give them all the available inventory that you have. We have a signed contract at Coliseo. This is legit.' "

In addition to music's biggest Puerto Rican superstar, Pérez says the Coliseo's concessions will also feature homegrown culinary delicacies, such as *alcapurrias*, meat and peppers-stuffed fritters traditionally made with green plantains and yuca, and the codfish version, *bacalaítos*.

"[This residency] will position Puerto Rico as a premier entertainment destination," Pérez says. "It will open the eyes of visitors who have never come to Puerto Rico. It will create awareness of Puerto Rico as an entertainment and leisure destination."

With destination tours — supercharged by Taylor Swift's global The Eras Tour — gaining in popularity, DelliBovi thinks Bad Bunny's residency will spark a trend in which international artists decide, "I'm going to go back to wherever I'm from and have a month of shows and make a lot of money," and benefit the economy of their hometown or country. "Everyone's going to want to support this," he says.

Because of Puerto Rico's status as a U.S. territory, Americans who travel there only need a driver's license for entry. Given this ease of access, DelliBovi says it is well-positioned to outpace other popular Caribbean destinations, including Mexican spots like Cancún and the Dominican Republic.

And with more than 1.1 million Puerto Ricans residing in the New York metropolitan area, according to the New York Academy of Sciences, Pabón expects they "will be the No. 1 [demographic] of people that are going to visit. I'm definitely expecting a lot of second- and third-generation Puerto Ricans to come back home. I know that for a lot of them it is going to be the first time that they'll come visit. I know it's going to be a special [destination] that's going to let them connect with their island. It was the artist's idea to create this synergy between them and their island."

According to the Puerto Rico Report, there are about 5.8 million Puerto Ricans living in the United States, compared with 3.2 million on the island.

"This is like a pilgrimage, a Hajj for Puerto Ricans," DelliBovi says. "If you're Puerto Rican and you love Bad Bunny, who's not going to want to go to the homeland and see him?"

"We're doing this not just for business," Pabón says. "This is done for our country, for our identity, because we really love Puerto Rico. The artist really loves it. Noah really loves it, and all the team. It's personal." b

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR VERY OWN

LIZ NORRIS & KRISTINA “RED” TANNER

AND TO ALL OF THE INSPIRING 2025 BILLBOARD WOMEN IN MUSIC HONOREES

ACTIVIST

Mercury Records promoted **Tyler Arnold** to chairman/CEO and **Ben Adelson** to president/COO.

YouTube launched a new subscription tier in the United States, Premium Lite, that lets users watch most videos without ads.

From The Desk Of...

KATHRYN FRAZIER

OWNER/CEO, BIZ 3; INTERNATIONAL COACHING FEDERATION-DESIGNATED PROFESSIONAL CERTIFIED COACH

BY LYNDSEY HAVENS

DAYS AFTER Kathryn Frazier lost her Altadena home in January's Los Angeles wildfires, she returned to survey what was left. "On my property, I had four little sheds and [one] was a healing room. There was a 300-pound citrine crystal in the middle and a Reiki table," she says. "When I drove up there, the entire street was gone. Everything on my property was gone — except for that healing shed."

Frazier has worn many music industry hats across her 30-plus-year career. In 1996, she founded the publicity firm Biz 3, which has staffers working remotely in several states. Its roster of 200-plus clients, who are primarily in the music business, includes The Weeknd, Lil Yachty, Chappell Roan and Victoria Monét, as well as known figures in film, TV, sports and comedy. In 2011, Frazier co-founded independent label OWSLA with Skrillex and others. And in 2018, she became an International Coaching Federation-designated Professional Certified Coach, enabling her to guide clients on professional and, if they choose, personal matters. She also teaches at the University of California, Los Angeles.

"All of the tools, routines and perspective that I've been cultivating for the last 30 years literally felt like I had the world's biggest, best insurance policy for emotional and mental health when something devastating or tragic happens," Frazier says, reflecting on the fires. "And it saved me."

Frazier used those tools to keep working despite the personal devastation she had suffered. The fires had upended clients' plans and her expertise was needed to, for example, help deal with the cancellation of The Weeknd's Los Angeles show and postponement of his sixth album, *Hurry Up Tomorrow*.

"A lot of times, you have to keep going because it's your livelihood," she says. "And of course all my camps were so loving and like, 'Please take what you need.' But there was a certain drive in me [to be] of service to others, whether it's in a philanthropic way or [the way] I've dedicated myself to helping [their] art. It does take you out of yourself in a healthy way. It's like walking on a tightrope, but because of all the years I've been doing this, my tightrope is a wider path, almost like a bridge."

How have you coped these last few months?

I've done a lot of surrendering, a lot of acceptance. For the first month, did I [use] all my tools? No, I was waking up every day in fight-or-flight [mode], just trying to emotionally process. Grieve. Get my family set up so we have somewhere to live. You're really, truly kind of starting over. And then also taking care of business. The day I woke up from the fires, I had the launch of The Weeknd's album campaign with a

KRIPA JONES

Richard Vega and **Stephen Schulcz** were promoted to partners in **WME's** music division.

Radio giant **Audacy** laid off roughly 200 employees across the company.

magazine cover. And I just didn't stop. It was a really big test of how I operate or show up when shit hits the fan. And all the tools absolutely served me.

Why did coaching feel like a necessary next step in your career?
I was becoming very disenchanted with the industry and felt really empty. Then I started to see a lot of people suffer — and not even people I work with. A lot of addiction, a lot of mental health stuff, a lot of just being worn. Resentment, anxiety, depression, all of it. I had a bigger calling, and why not be able to help people [spread their] art? Whether it's me doing their press or marketing or getting someone into a better headspace. That's why labels and managers want me to see their artists. And I always encourage people to have [their artists] see me when they're just beginning so that they don't go off the rails. Versus bringing me someone who's totally at the bottom and struggling and now has to cancel a hundred-date tour or something. It's preventative medicine.

> **"If even the smallest amount of earnings could go into hiring a couple of [personal and professional] coaches that could help your staff and your artists for 45 to 50 minutes every other week, you would have such a different company culture."**

How big is your coaching client list?
I have a waitlist that I operate from. But because my coaching clients travel so much, I can always get people on the list. I coach a lot of large artists. I coach [senior] executives. And I also coach people who have nothing to do with any of that. The one thing I find is it doesn't matter who they are or what their position is in life. The inner self-talk tends to be the same. The obstacles tend to be the same.

Since you've started coaching, have you seen a shift in how the music industry supports the well-being and mental health of its artists and executives?
I still constantly hear of people or see people being pushed and propped up, and I don't think the music industry is negligent. It's more that people don't know where to go or they don't have the resources. They don't know what to do with a drug-addicted client. Like, "Who do I call? Do you know any sober coaches?" Often, it's not knowing how to have the hard conversations when you see someone struggling. Many times over the years, I have gone up to artists — and again, a lot of them are not people I rep — when I can tell they're struggling, in particular with addiction, or when I hear that they're canceling a lot of tours and shows, I'll be like, "Sweetie, tell me what's happening. I can see you're struggling." And almost every time, they literally fall into my arms. They want to talk. They want help.

How are you working to broaden a community that can help?
It's what I'm teaching. My course at UCLA is about the music industry, and it has become really popular. The kids call it "the manifestation class." It's half "What do you need to do to move forward in music?" Almost all of them are musicians, as well as people who want to be in the industry working. It's also [half] "How do you navigate your own inner voice?" The negative self-talk, the imposter syndrome, the scarcity mindset, the indecision, compare-and-despair. And then, "How do you navigate and handle the outer voice?" The media voice, the public voice.

Your partner Dana Meyerson represents Chappell Roan. How did you feel about Chappell's Grammys speech regarding the industry supporting artists' mental and physical health?
I got tears in my eyes immediately and I had a resounding "Fuck yes" come through me. Because we do need to take care of the people who are actually creating the business of this entire business. And I so applaud anyone with a platform using it in service of helping other humans, especially with their mental and emotional health. It made me very proud that [Chappell is] a part of Biz 3. It made me so proud that I have a business partner in Dana that can recognize amazing talent and also have artists that say something on our roster. Dana has truly done the come-up in this industry and now is the reigning queen of PR, in my opinion. She finds the best, most amazing artists and builds them up to massive success.

Have you thought about helping other music companies establish career and wellness coaching?
That would be my dream. The main thing that would require is a budget. If even the smallest amount of earnings could go into hiring a couple of [personal and professional] coaches that could help your staff and your artists for 45 to 50 minutes every other week, you would have such a different company culture. When I quote unquote retire, it'll just mean I'm fully coaching, writing books and teaching. And maybe that's me trying to spearhead coaching divisions at companies.

How has the role of a publicist expanded over the years?
All the big press stuff is still there, but there's also a lot of paid media. That's been the most disheartening part for me. I'm afraid for it to go too far because then we stop having editorial, we stop having curatorial voices, we stop having people who are truly discovering what is amazing out there versus what got paid for. So I'm really hoping that doesn't usurp the true editorial and curatorial.

We're also seeing an uptick in influencer-based media. How does that affect your approach to publicity?
It changed the scope. There are more conversations with YouTubers that review or do music or certain shows [on] TikTok. I am 1,000% a glass-half-full person — I'm a recovered cynic. I'm like, "All right, what new opportunities are there for us?" There might be some magazines shuttering, but what other interesting way can you get good art out to the masses? Like, I'm not going down with the ship. Let's keep it moving.

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TO OUR BILLBOARD WOMEN IN MUSIC 2025 HONOREES!

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Dacus photographed March 5 in New York.

Answering The Call

After breaking big with boygenius, Lucy Dacus takes control of her narrative with a new solo project

BY STEPHEN DAW

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MEREDITH JENKS

LUCY DACUS has some mixed feelings about her newly minted public profile. “My dream is that I could play huge shows where [the crowd] knows every word,” she says, “we can connect after the show — and then I can wipe everyone’s mind of myself once they leave.”

The lack of *Men in Black*-esque technology notwithstanding, it’s easy to see why Dacus may feel that way. After spending the majority of her career as a cult artist with a tight-knit fan base in the indie scene, the singer-songwriter broke big alongside her friends Phoebe Bridgers and Julien Baker with *The Record* in 2023. Their supergroup, boygenius, sold out arenas, topped *Billboard*’s Rock Albums and Alternative albums charts while also earning a top 10 debut on the Billboard 200 and dominated the rock categories at the 2024 Grammys, winning three awards.

As she prepares her first solo release since the band’s breakthrough, Dacus, 29, still struggles with her shift from underground phenom to rock headliner. “Honestly, I don’t like being culturally relevant,” she says with a giggle. “I don’t like being somebody where people think they need to have a ‘take,’ in either direction.”

Yet even in that discomfort, Dacus exudes a confidence that feels new for her. *Forever Is a Feeling*, her fourth studio album (out March 28 on Geffen Records), takes the sound that Dacus has painstakingly crafted over the last decade and broadens it as her most lush collection to date.

Going into the creation of *Forever Is a Feeling*, Dacus says she “knew the scope was going to be different” for this album. That process included honing what she wanted to sing about. Whereas her past albums confronted loss and childhood trauma, the new set focuses almost entirely on romance. The first proper track off the album, “Big Deal,” finds Dacus reminding a doomed lover just how important they are; “Talk” traces the shifting dynamics of a relationship to its near end; and album closer “Lost Time” is one of the boldest love songs of her career, on which she declares, “I notice everything about you.”

“HONESTLY, I DON’T LIKE BEING CULTURALLY RELEVANT.” —DACUS

That line also encapsulates a key part of the singer’s songwriting process: Since she broke onto the scene with 2016’s *No Burden*, Dacus has always thrived at transforming specificity into universal lyrics. “Once you focus on one thing and one person, it actually recontextualizes everything else, and you realize that every detail is its own universe,” she says before quoting a line she read in one of Susan Sontag’s journals: “Love is noticing.”

With *Forever Is a Feeling* marking Dacus’ major-label debut on Geffen, the singer’s new music is striking a chord with mainstream listeners. “Ankles,” the project’s exhilarating lead single, earned Dacus her first solo entries on the Adult Alternative Airplay and Rock & Alternative Airplay charts. “She writes songs that are potent and timely but will endure for years to come,” says Matt Morris, executive vp of A&R at Interscope Geffen A&M. “The success of ‘Ankles’ at radio is a very deserved accomplishment for an artist who has already been so influential and continues to break new ground with this album.”

The set also finds Dacus continuing to evolve as a producer, after she recently helmed singer-songwriter Jasmine.4.t’s debut, *You Are the Morning*, alongside her boygenius bandmates. “A lot of [producing Jasmine’s album] was about advocating when it comes to being less experienced in the studio,” she explains. “It’s about helping develop a language and asking folks, ‘What do you want? Here’s how to say it.’ I want to continue to help hold the emotional space of saying, ‘Do us the favor of being a control freak.’ ”

That experience speaks to Dacus’ larger goal of late: using her newfound platform to create good. Shortly after the Trump administration began rolling out its anti-trans policy agenda, Dacus took to her social media and called for any of her trans fans hosting fundraisers for gender-affirming surgeries to share their campaigns so that she could donate $10,000 in $500 increments to those in need of help.

There’s a reason Dacus made that pledge in public. “Ten thousand dollars is not that much in the grand scheme of things,” she says. “But I wanted there to be a list of links on my profile so that if anybody else wanted to do what I was doing, then they could scroll through and donate as well. If other people are jumping in, then that can really matter.”

It’s that sense of renewed purpose that shows how far Dacus has come as a leading voice in rock — even if, as she points out, she is the “guinea pig” of the boygenius bandmates as the first of the trio to release a solo project since *The Record*.

“I feel really gratified when putting my albums out means something to someone else,” she says with a warm smile. “I wouldn’t do this if it didn’t matter to some people.”

HAIR BY JOSUE PEREZ. MAKEUP BY TAYLOR TREADWELL.

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INSIDE LOOK

Taking Center Stage

Tate McRae’s relentless drive translates to her biggest tour yet: “She’s going to work hard and so are you”

BY MICHAEL SAPONARA

BEFORE HER 2024 world tour had wrapped up, Tate McRae already had thoughts on how to level up her next live outing. “It’s a lot of back and forth and a lot of just brain dumping,” she says of her scattered ideating process with her creative director, Parker Genoway. “I come with a whole bunch of mood boards and random ideas… You dream as big as you can until you get the budget, then you have to narrow it down.”

Fortunately for McRae, that budget expanded, thanks to a massive first quarter of 2025. The 21-year-old singer’s *So Close to What*, her most mature and introspective album to date, arrived in February and gave McRae her first No. 1 entry on the Billboard 200, with 177,000 equivalent album units earned — the largest debut week for a studio album by a woman artist in five months — according to Luminate.

The chart-topping debut — along with a dozen Billboard Hot 100 entries from *So Close to What* and a high-octane performance of top 20 hit “Sports Car” on *Saturday Night Live* — helped cement McRae’s leap to pop’s A-list. It also set up her Miss Possessive arena tour, which began in Mexico City on March 18 and was followed by a handful of South American dates. She will head to Europe in May and will begin a North American run in Vancouver in August.

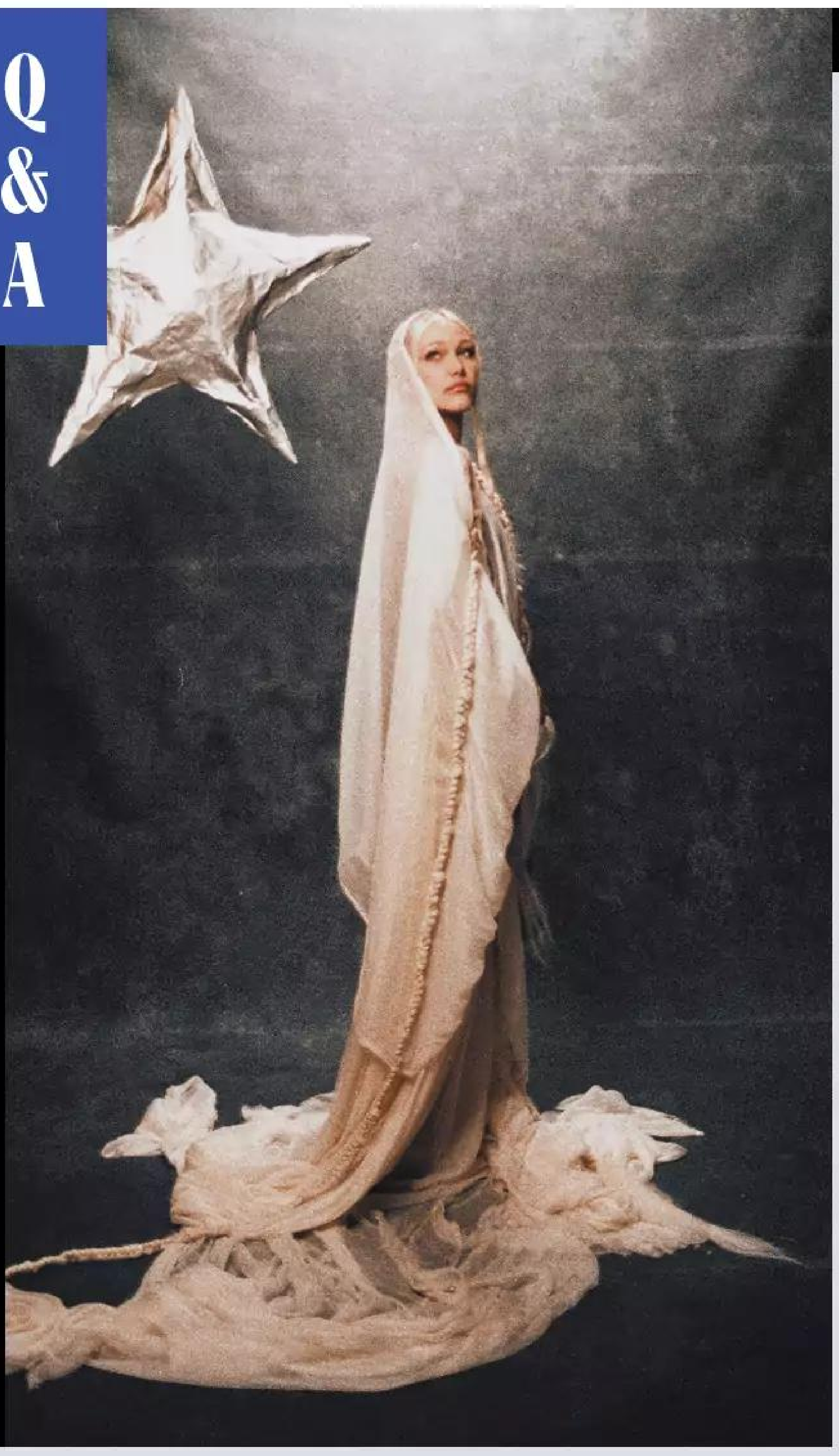
McRae pulled from a wide range of influences for her tour themes, including classic dance showcases. “It’s been really fun to dive into old musicals and old TV shows,” she says, “and bring out Fosse references and old *Chicago* references, and tap into that geeky musical side I think we all have.”

Meanwhile, Genoway — who collaborated with McRae on her *Think Later* tour and spearheaded her *SNL* and *The Tonight Show With Jimmy Fallon* performances earlier this year — points to McRae’s “It’s ok I’m ok” music video as an example of the singer’s opposing aesthetics, showcasing the intersection of grungy and glamorous. McRae says, “I’m referencing rap shows, I’m referencing Kendrick [Lamar] shows, Post Malone shows, and then I want to feel like a glam pop girl. It’s finding a cool in-between.”

The new tour includes a “thrust stage” in the shape of a giant T, and there are also cranes involved. “You try to make people walk in and be like, ‘What are we looking at right now?,’ and create your own world in there,” McRae says. Genoway adds that McRae should “feel like she’s in the middle of everything” surrounding the show, which also includes a B-stage and a mix of stage elevations.

As for McRae’s dance skills, “[Her] technical ability is unmatched,” says Genoway, who works as part of Silent House Productions. “Tate levels everyone up who works with her. She’s going to be at rehearsals late at night and so are you. She’s going to work hard and so are you.”

And although McRae is playing her biggest venues to date, her preshow routine has remained consistent. “I always take one Grether’s Pastille and suck on it,” she explains. Prior to a group prayer and a moment of meditation, McRae will warm up her voice by performing the ad-libs to Rihanna’s “Bitch Better Have My Money.” “My dancers probably think I’m fucking crazy,” she says with a chuckle. b



Q & A

State Of Grace

“IT’S BEAUTIFUL, how I have nothing to lose,” Grace VanderWaal says. After winning *America’s Got Talent* as a precocious, ukulele-toting 12-year-old in 2016, VanderWaal was fast-tracked into a major-label pop career, which stalled following her 2017 debut, *Just the Beginning*. Eight years later, VanderWaal, now 21, has prepared a very different follow-up: *Childstar*, out April 4 on Pulse Records, a concept album with dark edges that unpacks the uncomfortable truths of growing up in the spotlight — and provided some long-overdue catharsis. “I did whatever I wanted,” VanderWaal says, “and made something I was proud of.”

When did you start working on *Childstar*?
A little more than a year ago, but I wrote the album stupid quick. That was unexpected, but I was at a point where, due to some trauma development, all of this shit about my childhood started spilling out. It’s what my subconscious was doing, but I wasn’t mad at it. I thought it was raw and vulnerable, so I leaned into it.

On a song like “Proud,” you sing about seeking validation as a child and feeling controlled, and the listener can’t help but think about how your career began.
I wanted to talk about subliminal conditioning and how nothing is black and white. What makes something so complicated is when there’s no one to blame — that would be so easy. If you’re getting exposed to millions of people who are saying, “You’re great at this, you’re doing good,” while your brain is literally forming — of course there would be repercussions of that. But no one did anything wrong.

What made you partner with Pulse Records?
I brought the *Childstar* concept to every label you can imagine, and some people liked it and some people really didn’t like it. Then I went to Pulse, and they were the first ones to not only like it, but take it more extreme. I didn’t want to sign with people who would hold back an idea, but a lot of the art and visual ideas you see have been collaborative or fully from the Pulse team.

What would you tell longtime fans who are surprised by this album’s thematic focus?
I don’t know if they would be surprised. I think there’s a very small crowd that will feel like I’m stealing a narrative. As a child, I was very aware of the purpose that I served for people — I was this hope and happiness, this innocent angel. But it’s my story to tell, so whatever thoughts those people have, I don’t really care. I’m not a symbol for you.

—JASON LIPSHUTZ

MCRAE: CHARLIE DENIS. VANDERWAAL: ALLY CHEN.

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BILLBOARD

WOMEN in MUSIC

The Artists And Executives Leading The Industry

Woman of the Year

Doechii

BY KYLE DENIS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY SAMI DRASIN

LESS THAN AN HOUR INTO February's Grammy Awards telecast, one of the evening's undeniable peak moments occurred. Doechii — the charismatic, lyrically dexterous Florida rapper who was up for three awards that night — won best rap album, making her just the second solo female rapper (and third overall) to win the honor. "Don't allow anybody to project any stereotypes on you, to tell you that you can't be here, that you're too dark, or that you're not smart enough, or that you're too dramatic, or you're too loud," she declared in a tearful acceptance speech that instantly went viral.

For *Billboard*'s Woman of the Year, it was the culmination of a stunning rise, propelled by her acclaimed mixtape *Alligator Bites Never Heal*. But it was also just a beginning: The 26-year-old Tampa MC hasn't even dropped her debut album yet.

Doechii uploaded her first song to SoundCloud when she was just 16 and, in the following years, put out a pair of mixtapes, the latter of which included her first viral hit, 2020's "Yucky Blucky Fruitcake." In 2021, she guested on Isaiah Rashad's "What U Sed," and in 2022, she became the rapper's labelmate after signing a joint deal with Capitol Records and Top Dawg Entertainment.

Her Kodak Black-featuring single, "What It Is (Block Boy)" — released in early 2023, around when she was named *Billboard*'s Women in Music Rising Star — became her highest-peaking entry on the Billboard Hot 100 at that date, but a fraught period followed; subsequent singles didn't catch on, and Doechii was, as she later wrote on social media, "battling differences with [her] label and a creative numbness that broke [her]." To ease that tension, she turned to dance music. In March 2024, Doechii joined forces with Miami MC JT and DJ Miss Milan — the latter is now a fixture in her artist universe — to release "Alter Ego," a vivacious house-rap track that served as a palate cleanser for the fans who hadn't enjoyed her pop-rap swings from 2023, while also setting the stage for her "Swamp Sessions," weekly drops of new music that led up to *Alligator Bites Never Heal*'s late-August release.

The mixtape featured many "Swamp Sessions" tracks, though it wasn't an instant smash, debuting at No. 117 on the Billboard 200. But for Doechii, that was just a jumping-off point to let her singular vision and meticulous world-building — magnetic live and televised performances anchored by smartly assembled medleys and athletic, Bob Fosse-referencing choreography; proudly Black glam; idiosyncratic music videos nodding equally to ballroom culture, Westerns and telenovelas — blossom.

In the process, Doechii spun gold from one of the most painful periods of her life, and by late 2024, she was inescapable. In September, she featured on Katy Perry's dance-pop single "I'm His, He's Mine," and the following month, she delivered a scene-stealing verse on Tyler, The Creator's *Chromakopia* standout "Balloon." In December, she mounted a pair of eye-catching performances that kicked her rise into high gear: first, a medley of "Boiled Peanuts" and "Denial Is a River" on *The Late Show With Stephen Colbert* that featured her own choreography; and, just two days later, her thrilling NPR *Tiny Desk* set, which quickly dominated social media thanks to her fastidious storytelling and cohesive arrangements.

As her star has risen, Doechii's commitment to exalting all parts of her dark-skinned, Black queer self has remained paramount. It's why her first unaccompanied Hot 100 entry was "Denial Is a River," in which she confides to her therapist that her boyfriend had been cheating on her with another man — just one example of how refreshingly honest (and unafraid to get messy on wax) an artist she is. The week following the Grammys, *Alligator Bites Never Heal* soared to No. 14 on the Billboard 200, and in late February, "Denial Is a River" peaked at No. 21 on the Hot 100, while the track "Nissan Altima," which had been nominated for the best rap performance Grammy, hit No. 73.

"To be so fresh in her career, Doechii has incredible vision and focus," Top Dawg Entertainment president Terrence "Punch" Henderson Jr. says. "She's a true student of hip-hop and it shows based on how she's being embraced in the culture. The future is wide open for her."

Now, even as *Alligator Bites Never Heal* continues to find new fans, Doechii is already scoring hits outside of it. Her collaboration with Blackpink superstar Jennie, "ExtraL," debuted on the Hot 100 in March, and Doechii is looking to earn her biggest hit on the chart yet with "Anxiety." Originally a 2019 direct-to-YouTube track, "Anxiety" was sampled by New York drill rapper Sleepy Hallow last year, and after a February *Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*-inspired TikTok trend, audiences begged for a new solo version by the Swamp Princess, who quickly obliged in early March. (The track debuted at No. 13 on the Hot 100 — her highest-peaking hit on the chart yet — and Doechii recently added it to *Alligator Bites Never Heal*.)

She did so as she descended on Paris Fashion Week, where her spectacularly theatrical looks made her the event's undisputed victor — just ask Anna Wintour or Thom Browne — and affirmed she's more central to the pop culture conversation than ever. Case in point: An offhand quip she made on *Hot Ones* about straight men being one of her dating red flags set social media ablaze for a week straight.

Around the same time, Doechii made a surprise live appearance that proved why she'll always rise above that noise: At a Miami festival, Lauryn Hill invited her onstage to duet on "Doo Wop (That Thing)," then yielded the stage for Doechii to perform her own "Catfish." Rapping and singing alongside her "hero," the raw talent that makes Doechii an especially bright light in an ever-precarious industry was on full display — a reminder that, as she said at the Grammys, she's a true "testimony" to the merits of following a vision and trusting that the world will eventually catch up to you.

Doechii photographed Feb. 1 at
The Beverly Hilton in Los Angeles.

Tyla photographed March 11, 2024, in Los Angeles.

Impact

Tyla

BY HERAN MAMO

PHOTOGRAPHED BY RAMONA ROSALES

IN THE SUMMER OF 2023, Tyla made a massive splash with her Billboard Hot 100 top 10 *popiano* smash, "Water." But that turned out to be just a hint of what the South African star was capable of — and in March 2024, she released her acclaimed self-titled debut album, a showcase for her expert fusion of *amapiano*, Afrobeats, pop and R&B.

That same month, she was forced to cancel her debut Coachella set and first headlining international tour in the wake of a back injury. But no setback could stop Tyla, 23, from shining in the global spotlight. She ditched her aquatic motif for a sand-sculpted Balmain gown for her debut at the Met Gala in New York last May, and this year, she'll join A-listers like André 3000 and Usher as a member of the Costume Institute Benefit Host Committee as the event honors Black style. In October, she performed her song "Push 2 Start" for the first time at the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show; the sweltering reggae-infused track from the deluxe version of *Tyla*, released just days before, became her second Hot 100 entry.

Following her historic 2024 Grammy Award win — when "Water" took home the inaugural best African music performance trophy, making her the youngest-ever African artist to win a Grammy — Tyla picked up more hardware at the BET Awards, Billboard Music Awards and MTV Video Music Awards. And this year's Impact honoree remains determined to spotlight African music and bring her native South African amapiano to the world's biggest stages while dispelling the notion that she, and all African artists, only make "Afrobeats" music. Case in point: Come April, Tyla will finally play Coachella.

"The fact that what I've been doing has impacted people all over the world, especially African artists, is special," she says.

You've been very vocal while winning "Afrobeats" awards. Is it hard to relish those victories when your music is being mislabeled?

It's still an honor because I do use Afrobeats' influence in my music. I represent Africa as a whole. Genre is so fluid, so it's become difficult to categorize it. If people see it as the influence that the artist is using in their music getting its recognition, it'll help more [with perceptions], rather than being like, "This person is not that."

Who are the women who've been the most influential in your life as an artist?

Tems is a big one. What she's been able to do has been very inspiring. Britney [Spears], Whitney Houston, Aaliyah.

What performance that you've done in the past year have you found most impactful?

The shows I did back home [in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Pretoria]. I haven't really done much there since everything has happened [with "Water" blowing up]. Those were the biggest headlining shows I've ever had. It was fun being able to have that much control over the stage, the dancing, the lighting, the song arrangements. It was really cool to create something from scratch and give home a whole show that I've never been able to give them.

What else do you have in store for 2025?

New album. I've changed a lot in a short amount of time because I was kind of forced to with how fast I had to adapt to everything. I don't think it's going to be the same energy [as *Tyla*] at all, especially with what I've started making. It's different, but also still Tyla.

Moroney photographed Feb. 25 at The Paper House in Nashville.

Styling by Lindsey Dupuis
Dolce & Gabbana dress and shoes,
Camila Cabello necklace,
Nadri earrings and rings.

COUNTRY MUSIC STARDOM wasn't in Megan Moroney's plans. Though she wrote her first song at age 19, Moroney studied marketing and accounting at the University of Georgia. But in the end, that turned out to be just the preparation she needed for a career in Nashville.

"I guess because I grew up thinking I was going to be an accountant, I didn't know much about the industry and what rules I should even be following," Moroney, 27, says today. "There is definitely a bit of 'I'm going to do whatever I want to do.' "

So just two months after the Georgia native released her debut EP, *Pistol Made of Roses*, independently in July 2022, she chose to put out another song not on the EP: "Tennessee Orange," a ballad about a star-crossed romance between fans of two rival SEC football teams.

At first, Moroney doubted her decision. "You spent every dollar that you have making this EP. Why would you release another song that's going to take away from these songs?" she recalls thinking. But when Spotify offered to add a new song by Moroney to its Fresh Finds playlist — provided that she supplied one — the timing seemed perfect. "They are a huge platform and that's free marketing. Football season's coming and I've got this football song. It made sense."

That "football song" soared into the top 20 of *Billboard*'s Hot Country Songs chart, and on the strength of its success, Sony Music Nashville/Columbia Records signed Moroney in November 2022. With the labels' help working it to country radio, "Tennessee Orange" reached the top five of the Country Airplay chart and has now been certified triple-platinum by the RIAA.

For the relatable songs on her debut album, 2023's *Lucky*, and its follow-up, 2024's *Am I Okay?* (which debuted at No. 9 on the Billboard 200), the self-described "emo cowgirl" drew on influences like John Prine and Emmylou Harris — but filtered them through the lens of a 20-something navigating life and love, such as on the mean-girl takedown "I'm Not Pretty" and the introspective "No Caller ID." And Moroney's marketing background keeps coming in handy: She's connected with a wide audience thanks in large part to her innate branding acumen — using different colors to signify each new album era, for instance — and off-the-cuff use of social media.

"I like to create worlds around albums," Moroney says. "I feel like my fans would be very upset if I didn't continue that. I've been writing a lot, and I have a couple of colors in mind [for upcoming music]."

Last year, Moroney toured with Kenny Chesney and won two coveted industry honors: the Country Music Association's new artist of the year and the Academy of Country Music's new female artist of the year trophies. And as she continues to amass commercial wins (her catalog has registered 2.2 billion official on-demand streams in the United States through March 6, according to Luminate) and begins work on her next album, this year's Rulebreaker is still fearlessly following her creative impulses.

"I'm sure the next album will have a few emo cowgirl songs, but overall, I've been shocked at myself," she says. "I'm still in the creative process, but it's been happier than I thought."

You have built a relationship with your fans through social media from the get-go. Why was that so important to you?
I think social media and the direct me-to-fan interactions is how it's all blown up so quickly. I recently teased a song I had literally just written while I was in the islands. I was like, "I'm in the middle of the ocean and this song is such a vibe. I'm just going to post it." Because I can share so much of my life and share songs quickly and react to what they like, I know what they like, so then I can put it out. And sometimes my life is just straight up boring, and I'm like, "Sorry, guys!"

How else have you broken rules in your career?
I'm definitely not putting myself in any kind of box. I love country music, and all the instrumentation [on my songs] is country, but I'm not just thinking about being in a field with trucks. With branding "Tennessee Orange," I made the cover [art] on my phone. I have control of my social media. There is no "You should do this" or "You should wear this."

Who, to you, has been a rule-breaker?
Artists that are true to themselves. Dolly [Parton] did her own thing. Taylor Swift and Kacey Musgraves — especially when Kacey was coming up, her songwriting opened the door for conversational, universal lyrics in country music. For me, that was the first artist where I'm like, "Can you say that in a country song? OK, cool. If she can say it, I can probably say it."

Last year, you performed with Tate McRae in Nashville. Do you feel a kinship with women pop artists?
The pop girls, I love their music. Tate and Olivia [Rodrigo] are amazing. I was so surprised, honestly, when I sang with Tate how much crossover our fans [have]. I was a little nervous to go out in front of Tate's crowd. Even though it's Nashville, I was like, "These people are going to be like, 'Who is this girl?' " But fortunately, everyone freaked out, and so that made me happy.

For other artists who want to break rules, what advice do you have?
Trust your gut and make decisions based off you and your career alone. Don't bring another artist's success into how you think you should operate. It's OK to take risks, too.

HAIR BY JESSICA MILLER AT FORWARD ARTISTS. MAKEUP BY JESSICA CANDAGE AT FORWARD ARTISTS. ON-SITE PRODUCTION BY ASHLEY HORNE HERRING.

Selkie top and Nadri ring.

Abrams photographed Feb. 1 at
The Beverly Hilton in Los Angeles.

Styling by Spencer Singer
Chanel top and skirt, Manolo Blahnik shoes.

Songwriter of the Year

Gracie Abrams

BY LYNDSEY HAVENS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY SAMI DRASIN

SITTING IN A sun-drenched room at Los Angeles' Beverly Hilton, Gracie Abrams is shaking her head "no." She's reflecting on a breakout 2024 — during which she scored her highest-charting Billboard Hot 100 hit to date and received her second Grammy Award nomination, for "Us," a collaboration with none other than Taylor Swift. But Abrams still struggles to see herself as the superstar she's become.

"It's such a dream and a pretty wild ride to look back on the year and be able to reflect on all of these moments that I never could have imagined ever happening," the 25-year-old says in quiet awe. When it comes to the matter of her smash hit "That's So True," it *is* true — she never saw it coming. After humming the song's in-the-works hook and melody for months, she and her songwriting partner and roommate Audrey Hobert finished it in about 15 minutes one day after "laughing our asses off on the roof" of New York's Electric Lady Studios.

The catchy, stream-of-consciousness song was one of four additions to the deluxe version of Abrams' second album, *The Secret of Us* (which arrived in October), but quickly surpassed the album's previous hits, including "I Love You, I'm Sorry" and "Close to You" (which peaked at Nos. 19 and 49, respectively, while "True" reached No. 6). Such wins have helped Abrams, who co-wrote and co-produced every track on *The Secret of Us* and its deluxe edition, earn the Songwriter of the Year honor — but, with characteristic humility, she won't say she's mastered the craft just yet.

"Fuck no! Sorry," she says with a laugh. "I feel very far away from having mastered anything in my life. But I will continue to attempt to get closer to that point."

Since you released your debut album in 2023, how have you grown as a songwriter?
What I can point to specifically that has broadened my horizons is the partnership I've had with Audrey. She's my oldest friend and we very much grew up together, and then to fold in this collaborative [relationship] was not something either of us ever would have anticipated. But as a songwriter, to find someone who you feel so open with, who you trust so much, who knows everything about you, who knows what your conversational language sounds like, who knows if you're lying about a feeling... it infused so much life into our album that we made together.

What's an example of a time she called "bullshit" on you?
Less like "bullshit" and more [like] in the morning if I would come downstairs and she's like, "How are you doing?" I'm like, "I'm fine." And she's like, "You fucking liar." Or like, "I'm really over that person," [and she's like,] "No, you're not, you liar." We checked each other as much in our songwriting process as we did in our day-to-day friendship.

As we speak, you're about to head out on your European/U.K. tour [which Abrams wrapped March 12]. How did you spend your time before returning to the road?
I have just come back from being at Aaron [Dessner's studio, Long Pond, in New York] so I feel like... I'm in the middle of something. I don't know what it is yet... We've been collecting a whole lot of music over the past few months, and he and I are both very curious about all of it because I think [the songs] belong in different worlds a little bit, which excites me. I think that means there are many possibilities for what either the singular project looks like or multiple [projects].

You said you haven't mastered songwriting yet. Do you feel close?
No. Oh, my God, no. I want to broaden my vocabulary times a thousand. I want to spend the majority of my year reading so that I can do that. I feel nowhere near that level. I have a million people I want to continue to learn from. Taylor is a great example of someone I've been lucky enough to spend a lot of time around and every single time I'm like, "Tell me everything you know, please. Teach me how to be." I want to live fully and do my best to capture what that feels like.

HAIR BY BOBBY ELLIOT AT THE WALL GROUP. MAKEUP BY EMILY CHANG AT THE WALL GROUP.

Group of the Year

aespa

BY HANNAH DAILEY

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ABI POLINSKY

HOURS INTO THEIR *Billboard* Women in Music photo shoot, the members of aespa are goofing off. High-pitched giggles reverberate through the studio as Winter, Karina, Ningning and Giselle tickle one another's sides, talk in silly voices and play with the straps on their leathery stage outfits.

It's mesmerizing to watch the four early-20-somethings be so, well, *real*, not just because they're one of K-pop's most polished acts — which they demonstrate by immediately snapping back into place once the photographer is ready again — but also because aespa has a particular penchant for the surreal. The SM Entertainment group debuted in 2020 with K-pop's first lineup to feature both human and virtual members, pairing each girl with an artificial intelligence (AI) avatar as part of a cyberpunk musical metaverse marked by dark, 808-laced hyperpop and edgy-chic outfits.

Ever since, the act has leveraged its niche into unprecedented crossover success — in November, mini-album *Whiplash* made it the first K-pop girl group to have six projects reach the Billboard 200 top 50, and it just wrapped its second global arena tour — and a reputation for being one of the genre's "most adventurous and contemporary" groups, as its "Over You" collaborator Jacob Collier put it to *Billboard* in January.

But going forward, 2025's Group of the Year also wants to focus on something potentially even more subversive: showing that beneath the personas, its members are just those real-life girls blowing off steam between camera flashes. "We're not actual AI; we do have days where we don't feel the best," Giselle says once the foursome has squeezed together on a couch. "Our storyline can be fun to keep up with, but I want fans to look up to aespa for our human traits, too."

From left: Winter, Karina, Ningning and Giselle of aespa photographed Feb. 10 in New York.

Why do you think aespa has made a name as trendsetters?

GISELLE There's always going to be trends, but we don't follow them because we can't. We have our own story to tell that was set from the start.

WINTER We usually talk about ourselves more than love [in our lyrics]. We're the main characters of our stories.

KARINA We're honest. Of course, you have to be professional and present your best self, but we also try to show the not-perfect side. We're not trying to filter everything or over-mask ourselves.

Giselle

STYLING BY ANNA PARK, HAYUN JU AND SON YEJI. HAIR AND MAKEUP BY HEENA YUN AND YUMIN SON. SET DESIGN BY DANIEL PROSKY.

Karina

What's next in aespa's evolution?

NINGNING We did start out with our avatar concept, but now we're also trying really hard to explore different concepts and themes. In the future, there may be moments where the fans don't see the avatars.

KARINA We want aespa to be a really stylish group, not only in fashion and music, but also in terms of versatility and excelling in every genre. I also want all our members to shine individually when we're together and even when we're not together.

Winter

Who are your favorite artists/dream collaborators at the moment?

NINGNING Doechii. I'd just really like to meet her.

WINTER Billie Eilish. She's so good at expressing her honest feelings through her music.

KARINA Olivia Dean. Whenever I need to find composure, I listen to her.

GISELLE SZA. Her music is so hard to get sick of — and very relatable.

As a girl group, how do you support one another?

NINGNING We're all from different countries and environments, but we've been doing this for five years. They're always there for me. Working with this mindset that we're in this together makes it easier to handle challenging situations and emotions.

WINTER I don't think we could've made it through this alone. We've had to overcome certain obstacles, but with each other's support, we were able to move forward. (*Karina giggles as Giselle starts poking her affectionately.*) These girls are all very precious to me.

Badu photographed Feb. 7 at Mars Hill Farm in Ferris, Texas.

Icon

Erykah Badu

BY DAMIEN SCOTT

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JAI LENNARD

ERYKAH BADU REMEMBERS her last moments of normalcy. The generational talent who changed the course of R&B and hip-hop with her home-cooked neo-soul has never truly been "normal," of course. But before Badu was the futuristic stylist we know her to be, she was just a young woman from Dallas. One who traveled to New York during the paralyzing North American blizzard of 1996 to finish a debut album she hoped would be good enough to allow her to make another one. "That's how I met New York. Like, 'Oh, you cold!' " she says in the much more agreeable climate of her hometown. "I was like, 'OK, if this is what I got to do — then this is what I got to do.' "

Despite the frigid weather, the then-25-year-old Badu found a warm and welcoming community in Brooklyn's Fort Greene neighborhood. In 1992, *Entertainment Weekly* correctly noted the area was the "red-hot center of a national black arts renaissance." Chris Rock called it home, as did Gil Scott-Heron. Digable Planets copped a spot and recorded its second album, *Blowout Comb*, as a love letter to the hood. Badu moved into a cozy apartment above Mo's Bar & Lounge, right around the way from one of her favorite spots, Brooklyn Moon Café. Spike Lee's 40 Acres and a Mule — the studio behind *Do the Right Thing*, *Malcolm X* and *Jungle Fever* — was close by. "[I was] right in the center of Blackness," she remembers. "Dreads, headwraps and people who looked like me who I didn't know existed. I felt like I belonged there. I met people who felt the way I felt, and that's when I knew I wasn't alone in my journey or quest to find out, 'Who am I?' "

To answer that question, Badu would need to enlist her own spirit guides both within and outside of the music industry. One of the most memorable was a woman named Queen Afua, who became a mentor of sorts for young Badu. In addition to helping Badu with her holistic journey, Afua "became my family away from Dallas. She communicated with me like a mother." But to keep her profile as low as possible, Badu didn't tell Afua why she was in the Big Apple: "I didn't tell anyone in New York anything. I just wanted to live." And so, she lived. When she wasn't kicking it in Fort Greene, Badu was taking classes at Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater taught by dance legend Joan Peters. She took a Kemetic language course, because why not? "A lot of things were happening, and they all became a part of who I am," Badu says. "You know, as Erica in America."

Badu constantly told herself to be as "regular as possible," because she knew the album she was trudging to Battery Studios in Midtown Manhattan to work on with a group of musicians who would go on to become legends in their own right — people like James Poyser and Questlove from Philadelphia's The Roots — was going "to take this motherfucker by storm."

The album, *Baduizm*, did just that. It debuted at No. 2 on the Billboard 200 and ruled the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart. Buoyed by the meditative smash hit "On & On," *Baduizm* helped usher in what became known as neo-soul: a type of R&B that built on the traditions and stylings of the past while breathing new life and energy into the genre. While most neo-soul tracks sampled or interpolated older soul songs, "On & On," with its rolling bass and booming drums, was wholly original. It felt like a completely fresh idea (and Badu was full of them) but also something familiar and comfortable — the delicate balance most artists work their entire lives trying to strike.

"[I'd] never seen someone just full of a bunch of ideas," Questlove recounted in a 2024 interview with Poyser. "She had a lot of choruses ready. She was the first person I met that instantly had a clever chorus ready in the stash." For the album's third single, "Other Side of the Game," the Roots drummer recalled that Badu came in with the idea to rework the famous chorus to Inner Circle's "Bad Boys Reply." Even more impressive, he remembered, was that the version of the song that made it onto the album was essentially the first take that was committed to tape: "I thought, 'Oh, this girl is going to make it.' "

DRESSED IN AN OVERSIZE SWEATSHIRT and sweatpants with a warm-looking knitted cap, today Badu comes across every bit as enchanting as she's made out to be. Sitting in the back room of South Dallas' Furndware Studios, she speaks with a calm directness that you would expect from a shaman or elementary school teacher. Every question elicits a thoughtful pause and an even more thoughtful answer. When I ask Badu about making versus performing music, for example, she goes into a deep rumination about the focus needed to create great music. "I want to focus, I want to be in the moment of the foreplay. Creating the music. The tragedy. The love. The experience of the whole thing," she says before exhaling. "Then I go somewhere else after this is done. This is a movie and the studio audience is cracking up and crying and shit... I hope that answers that question."

Badu makes you feel as if you're the most important person in the world when she's speaking to you. It's a skill many successful people have, but few can also make you feel like the luckiest — as if she's letting you, and only you, in on a cosmic secret. That may owe in part to the spiritual tangents she sometimes goes on when answering questions. Or it may simply be the attentiveness she offers in conversation. She says she has learned that the way to become successful — and to maintain that success — is to be healthy, present and aware, and to never stop learning.

Born Erica Abi White in Dallas, Badu didn't always aspire to "make it." She simply wanted to create art like most of her family had done. She grew up with her grandmother, mother and uncles, in what she describes as "a house of music lovers and collectors." There was music in every room — literally. "There were records from wall to wall, a radio in the bathroom that was on the local FM soul station," she recalls. Everyone was allowed to have their own corner to express their musical tastes. "My uncles would be in the back listening to funk. They were into Bootsy [Collins] and George Duke and Stanley Clarke. My mother was more into the sirens — the Chaka Khans, the Phoebe Snows, the Deniece Williamses, The Emotions. My uncle, who's a rebel, was into Prince and Pink Floyd and Three Dog Night," she says. "I had a variety to pull from."

Badu immersed herself in everything artistic Dallas had to offer a young person. When she was in elementary school, she began taking classes at the Dallas Theater Center, as well as the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center, where she would sing and dance and perform in plays. Badu and her younger sister, Koko, also frequented The Black Academy of Arts and Letters, where her mother and godmother volunteered. TBAAL's founder, Curtis King, recalls seeing the "it thing" in Badu from an early age.

Badu went to Louisiana's Grambling State University to study theater but left in 1993 and returned to Dallas before she graduated. She planned to pursue music full time — but since dreams don't come true overnight, Badu found herself working a series of odd jobs to support herself while she worked with her cousin Robert "Free" Bradford to record her demo, *Country Cousins*. The two would perform around Dallas as a duo — she would sing and he would rap. But even with the 19-song project, Badu couldn't pay a label to take her on. She says she auditioned for everyone — Sony, Priority, Bad Boy, So So Def — but didn't catch a break until D'Angelo's then-manager, Kedar Massenburg, saw her perform at South by Southwest and received her demo. He immediately signed her to his fledging imprint, Kedar Entertainment.

"As soon as I heard 'On & On,' I knew that I had to get involved," Massenburg told *Billboard* in 2017. "The thing that struck me immediately was the beginning, because Erykah had used a beat in the intro that Daddy-O, a member of a group I managed called Stetsasonic, had created: Audio Two's 'Top Billin.' "

ON-SITE PRODUCTION BY JOY WALDEN

Country Cousins was the foundation of what became *Baduizm*, and Badu's debut cemented not only her career but also the neo-soul scene that had been developing. "I think Tony! Toni! Toné! kind of opened the door, D'Angelo took it to the next level in terms of edginess, and Erykah solidified it," Massenburg said. "That's what *Baduizm* did. You're saying, 'I don't need to wear these kinds of clothes or look this kind of way, this is my "-izm." ' The only thing that dates it is the term 'neo-soul' — maybe that's the issue. It places it at a time when that term meant a certain thing. Take away the term, and it stands with the best of the artists that are out here today."

You would think, with the impact she has had on R&B and hip-hop, that Badu would have dropped more than five albums over her 28-year career. But nope — just five studio sets, a live album and a mixtape. Granted, they're all classics and helped either introduce a new sound or popularize a new style of working. Take 2008's *New Amerykah Part One (4th World War)*, which was recorded mainly on laptops with Apple's GarageBand software, with Badu emailing sessions and files back and forth with producers. At the time, it was a pretty novel idea to forego the studio for your bedroom — only new, cash-strapped artists were doing that. Badu helped bring the practice to the mainstream — just one of many examples of her being aware of the winds of change before most of her peers.

That same awareness inspired her to launch her label, Control Freq, in 2005. At the time, Badu said it was her attempt at making a "profitable home for artists, with fair contracts that will return ownership of the music to the artists after a period of time." The first artist signed to the label was Jay Electronica, the father of Badu's third child. "I didn't develop him at all. I just wanted to be near his greatness," Badu says. "He needed to be heard and I had a platform. I wasn't interested in building an artist from scratch. I was interested in artists who were building their own platforms."

When it comes to her own music, Badu is less interested in what she puts on wax than in what she puts forth onstage. "I tour eight months out of the year for the past 25 years," she says emphatically. "That's what I do. I am a performance artist. I am not a recording artist. I come from the theater. It's the immediate reaction between you and the audience and the immediate feeling. The point where you become one living, breathing organism with people. That's what I live for. It's my therapy. And theirs, too. We're in it together. And I like the idea that it happens only once."

Unlike most performance artists, however, Badu doesn't create her music with the live aspect in mind. Once she decides to perform a song, she begins to re-create it for the stage. "It's like, 'OK, now this is one arena. Now, what are you going to do with it in here?' " (One of her most popular songs, "Tyrone," was only ever released as a live rendition, on her 1997 *Live* album.) The results speak for themselves. Badu — this year's Women in Music Icon — has emerged as one of the premier performers of her generation.

IN 2015, WHILE ON AN APPARENT HIATUS, Badu released a remix of Drake's gargantuan smash "Hotline Bling." Produced by the Dallas-based Zach Witness — who first connected with Badu after she heard a remix he did of her 2000 song "Bag Lady" and reached out to him — "Cel U Lar Device" was posted to SoundCloud without much explanation.

The track became the lead single for her mixtape — and most recent project — 2015's *But You Caint Use My Phone* (a nod to "Tyrone"), which she recorded in less than two weeks with Witness in his home studio. The tape centered on a theme of cellphone use and addiction, with Badu putting her spin on a few other popular phone-based songs like Usher's "U Don't Have To Call" and New Edition's "Mr. Telephone Man."

Since then, Badu has popped up here and there. She says she only collaborates with people whose music she really enjoys. Dram featured her on his debut album in 2016. She jumped on a track for Teyana Taylor's self-titled album in 2020. She lent her vocals to a Jamie xx song that came out in January. And at the 2025 Grammy Awards, she won the best melodic rap performance statue for a collaboration with Rapsody, "3:AM." "It snuck up on me!" she says. "I remember collaborating with [producer] S1 and Rapsody and we had such a good time promoting the song and I just felt like it was all for her basically. She worked very hard to get to this place."

She still loves rap, although she doesn't follow it as much as she used to and now experiences a lot of it through her children: Seven, 28; Puma, 21; and Mars, 16. (She says they also have attempted to make music, which is not surprising considering their fathers are all rap legends: André 3000, The D.O.C. and Electronica, respectively.)

"[The thing I like about rap right now] is the same thing I liked about rap when I first met it," she says. "Rap is the people. Hip-hop is the people. It's the folks. It's the tribe. I have the luxury of experiencing having children who I watch grow up and love and encourage very much, and I cannot separate them when I see artists who are that age coming up. That's how they feel. They are continuing the tradition."

Badu may say she's not as tuned in as she used to be, but she's clearly keeping tabs on what's hot right now. She's been hard at work on her first studio album in 15 years, which is being produced solely by The Alchemist, the hip-hop journeyman who has had a resurgence as of late thanks to his work with the Buffalo, N.Y.-based Griselda crew and artists like Larry June. Badu posted a teaser of the project on Instagram to an exuberant response from fans who've been damn near begging her to drop something new and show the generations of artists who've had her pinned to the center of their mood boards how it's supposed to be done.

The album has been taking up most of her time; she says she can't wait until she's done. And whatever time that isn't occupied by her family and nonmusical interests — such as her cannabis strain collaboration with brand Cookies called That Badu — goes toward keeping herself in the best mental, emotional and physical shape possible and making sure she's set for the future. "When I was building my house, I was making sure that I was building ramps for when I was elderly and couldn't walk by myself," the now-54-year-old says. "When I do my workouts, I do workouts that are conducive for picking up groceries and grandchildren and things like that."

That's not to say she isn't having fun. Another of her nonmusical hobbies is car collecting. Badu, whose grandmother bought her toy cars instead of dolls when she asked for the latter as gifts, lights up when asked to run down what's currently in her collection: "I get happy when talking about it." There's a baby blue '67 Lincoln Continental with suicide doors and a chandelier in the back ("Original interior, original white wall tires, original radio"); a 1989 Land Rover Defender; a 1971 Sting Ray Corvette ("Matte black, neon yellow stripe. It looks like the Batmobile"). A collector since she was 21 years old, her first car was a 1965 convertible Super Beetle. "Before I was Erykah Badu the artist, that was my hobby that I loved." Her uncle Mike, the one who was into funk music, is also into cars and keeps and maintains some of hers; the rest are tucked away in a Dallas garage.

It all sounds surprisingly normal for a music superstar of Badu's stature, and that's just what she likes about it. And it's the same reason why, after all her success, she has remained in South Dallas. "It was very hard for me to be away because this is where I want to be," she says. "I wanted to come here and build. This is where everybody is. I'm five generations in Dallas. This is my place. It's my home."

Powerhouse

GloRilla

BY KYLE DENIS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY SAMI DRASIN

M**EMPHIS-BRED RAP** star GloRilla knows a thing or two about staging a comeback.

In 2022, she exploded into the mainstream with the Grammy Award-nominated, summer-dominating "F.N.F." — and quickly followed it up with the Cardi B-assisted "Tomorrow 2," which peaked at No. 9 on the Billboard Hot 100 and became her first top 10 hit on the chart.

But 2023 proved to be a far cry from her triumphant rookie year. She kicked it off with the Moneybagg Yo collaboration "On What U On," which stalled at No. 56 on the Hot 100 — and was her only release that year to even reach the chart. Everything she dropped bricked, whether it was the radio-ready "Lick or Sum" or her direct response to detractors, "Internet Trolls." And that March, tragedy struck when three people died in a fatal crowd surge at her concert with Finesse2tymes in Rochester, N.Y. With her commercial pull waning, everyone on the internet (trolls and otherwise) seemed to agree: Big Glo had fallen off.

"2023 was an eye-opener for me," the 25-year-old says. "I realized that I can't take my foot off the gas. I didn't know I was doing that, but I did. It was a reality check when I would drop music and people would hate it. Getting closer to God was one of the key things that helped me."

Born Gloria Hallelujah Woods, the eighth of 10 children, GloRilla grew up in the church. She sang in the choir and her mother only allowed gospel music in the house; as her taste evolved and she found a home in hip-hop, gospel music and its encouraging messages remained present in her raps — from 2022's "Blessed" to "Rain Down on Me," a gospel-rap track from *Glorious*, her 2024 debut studio album.

GloRilla also looked to Yo Gotti, the rap superstar and fellow Memphian who's now her label head, as a mentor. Since Gotti signed Glo to his CMG Records imprint in 2022, the two have worked closely to hone her sound and image, taking her from viral breakout to presidential campaign surrogate (she performed at a Wisconsin rally for former Vice President Kamala Harris last fall). "Even with all the success and accolades, she's still the same authentic and ambitious hustler that I met back in 2022," Gotti says of Glo.

With the help of her CMG team, renowned choreographer Sean Bankhead and creative director Coco Gilbert, GloRilla spent late 2023 plotting the perfect road map to recapture her momentum. The plan worked: With her first release of 2024, the anthemic "Yeah Glo!," GloRilla came out swinging. Arriving in February, the motivational anthem took over nightclubs, cookouts and locker room celebrations. The song topped Mainstream R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay for two weeks and reached No. 28 on the Hot 100, then her highest peak for a solo single.

"To have that little break, come back with 'Yeah Glo!' and have it start going up on the first day [of release] — that was personal," GloRilla tells *Billboard* in between rehearsals for her forthcoming *Glorious* tour.

"Yeah Glo!" was meant to introduce GloRilla's debut album, but its runaway success significantly shifted those plans. "I felt like I had to build my momentum back, so that's where the mixtape kicked in," she explains. "We made that decision around the time 'Yeah Glo!' came out." *Ehhthang Ehhthang* arrived in April and yielded another hit single, the Megan Thee Stallion-assisted "Wanna Be," which later received a Cardi B remix and peaked at No. 11 on the Hot 100. The week before, Megan had announced Glo as the special guest for her arena-conquering Hot Girl Summer Tour. Between *Ehhthang Ehhthang* and successful guest appearances on BossMan Dlow's "Finesse" and Big Boogie's "Bop," GloRilla had become inescapable — and she hadn't even launched her official album campaign yet.

While opening the Hot Girl Summer Tour in June, GloRilla released "TGIF," which kicked her 2024 into an even higher gear. Within a week of the song's release, Rihanna shared an instantly viral clip of herself adorably dancing and singing along to it. By February 2025, GloRilla became the first artist to simultaneously become a face of all four of Rihanna's Fenty brands.

With Riri begging for an album in her DMs and Beyoncé posting pictures with her on Instagram, GloRilla had undoubtedly became the hottest woman MC in the game. As "TGIF" cemented her pop appeal, GloRilla kept her core audience fed — and reinforced her sound — with her feature on Real Boston Richey's "Get in There."

"Me and my team figured out the difference between a mixtape and album song: You just got to hear it," she says. "My core sound is how [gritty] the mixtape sounded. When I went into album mode, I already had a lot of those songs before the mixtape — but I knew they weren't mixtape songs."

After months of recapturing and multiplying her momentum, GloRilla finally released *Glorious* in October. With collaborators ranging from Sexyy Red to Maverick City Music, Glo's studio debut was a capstone on her massive year, earning the highest opening week total for an album by a female rapper in 2024 (69,000 units) for a No. 5 debut on the Billboard 200. Five of its songs landed on the Hot 100, including "Whatchu Kno About Me" (No. 17), which Taylor Swift later used to soundtrack an Eras Tour TikTok. "I was real excited about that," Glo recalls. "Everybody was sending it to me — I was feeling like 'that girl' when she posted that."

Now, after scoring three Mainstream R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay No. 1 hits in under a year and being named *Billboard*'s Hottest Female Rapper of 2024, this year's Women in Music Powerhouse is determined to deliver an impeccable show on her tour, which commenced March 5 in Oklahoma City and will play arenas and music halls throughout the United States.

"Even though I'm not as good at dancing, I'm getting better and I learn fast," she says, noting that her tour prep playlist includes gospel classics like Yolanda Adams' "Open My Heart." "I learn about two new routines a day. I like helping out with choreography because I get to do what I'm comfortable with and showcase my vision."

Still, GloRilla isn't as concerned with being the best rapper alive as she is with her own consistent personal growth. "I have the desire to be the best me I can be," she proclaims.

GloRilla photographed March 6, 2024, in Los Angeles.

A cousin is a sister destiny forgot to give you
你走了
成为明
星

Hitmaker

Meghan Trainor

BY JASON LIPSHUTZ AND TETRIS KELLY

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MUNACHI OSEGBU

Trainor photographed Nov. 18, 2024, in Los Angeles.

Styling by Allison Cartagena
BUNDĪ top and bra.
Left: ASOS dress, Silent Opus jewelry.

“I **CONSIDER A HIT** song one that my 3-year-old knows,” Meghan Trainor says. The 31-year-old pop star and mother of two sons, Riley and Barry, says that her first-born has been jamming to Lady Gaga’s “Abracadabra” lately and also loves Billie Eilish and Miley Cyrus. When her own breakout single, “All About That Bass,” reached the top of the Billboard Hot 100 in 2014, she noticed that the song connected with both young children and adults. “So if I get kids involved in my songs as well as adults, I’m like, ‘Oh, that’s a hit,’ ” she says.

A decade removed from “All About That Bass,” a body-positive doo-wop riff that went viral years before TikTok, the former best new artist Grammy Award winner has fashioned a career as a chart stalwart with all-ages appeal. After her first two albums, 2015’s *Title* and 2016’s *Thank You*, produced six top 20 hits on the Hot 100 combined, Trainor spent the rest of the decade releasing one-off singles and collaborations, dabbling in film and TV projects and starting a family with her husband, actor Daryl Sabara. She returned to the Hot 100 in 2022 with “Made You Look,” which spawned a widespread dance trend online and peaked at No. 11, and “Criminals,” from her 2024 album, *Timeless*, reached the chart last year after serving as the theme song to the hit Netflix drama *The Perfect Couple*.

Next on her to-do list? Two more kids (“There’s so many dudes here — I want a baby girl”) and, maybe, leveraging her music career into a big-screen debut. “I want to be in a rom-com and then write the song for it,” she says. “Who do I have to talk to?”

Which of your own hits sticks with you the most?

I love the reactions I get from the audience. There’s nothing harder than when you’re onstage and you’re a songwriter and you’re like, “You don’t know this one?!” And when they do, you see me call out people who know every word. I know “Me Too” is always going to be fun. I know “Lips Are Movin’ ” is always going to be a blast.

When you’re in the studio, do you think about what the potential hits will be?

Usually when I’m writing an album, I’ll have one song that’s my favorite and I’ll say, “This is the top girl. This is how I want the entire album to sound like and we need to beat her.” For [the 2022 album] *Takin’ It Back*, I had “Don’t I Make It Look Easy.” “Made You Look” came after, and every day we just tried to beat it.

Why do you think the TikTok audience loves you so much?

My songs are really hooky. My main thing when I’m trying to write a song is I want you to be able to sing the melody by the second chorus. I think my stuff was just catchy enough that [TikTok users] could use the sound or make a simple dance to it or have fun and show something. I’ve noticed “Made You Look” still being used to sell products. I’m like, “That’s my song!” I still freak out.

Hearing new artists like Chappell Roan and Sabrina Carpenter, what do you think a hit sounds like now?

I need you to answer this for me, Sir *Billboard*, because I’m literally about to start my next album. There’s so many open lanes. Chappell and Sabrina are bringing instruments in and beautiful melodies and taking risks. What Doechii is doing — she’s just changing the world through art and [her] talent is thriving. Going into my next album, I’m nervous but also excited because there’s no more rules.

Is there something to be said about writing for yourself versus working with others?

I love learning from others. I always [say], “Please put me in a room with a better tennis player than me so I can learn more about tennis.” And sometimes going into a session with new people is scary. It’s like blind dating. And then you have to go, “Let’s try to create magic together.” My goal on this album is to find as many writers I love that I can collaborate with. I love Daniel Nigro. I want to work with him so bad. If you’re reading this, that’s my dream. And Andrew Watt. Andrew, pick me, choose me, love me. We would do something magical.

HAIR BY EDUARDO PONCE. MAKEUP BY ALISON CHRISTIAN AT THE WALL GROUP. ON-SITE PRODUCTION BY KAYLA LANDRUM.

Annakiki top, Michael Ngo skirt,
Silent Opus jewelry.

Breakthrough

Ángela Aguilar

BY GRISELDA FLORES

PHOTOGRAPHED BY POONEH GHANA

ÁNGELA AGUILAR HAS a tangible presence — even over Zoom. It's mid-February and the 21-year-old singer is all smiles, almost giddy, as she joins our call from Mexico City, where she's hunkered down in a studio working on her next album. "You probably didn't recognize me because it's a new me," she says, referencing the shoulder-length, soft chocolate brown style that has replaced her signature short bob. "I do miss being [*The Incredibles* character] Edna 'E' Mode," she adds with a grin, "but I'm enjoying this new stage."

The "new me, new stage" goes beyond the new hairstyle. Ángela, the youngest of the Aguilar dynasty — her father is *música mexicana* icon Pepe Aguilar, her grandparents legendary Mexican entertainers Antonio Aguilar and Flor Silvestre — married fellow regional Mexican superstar Christian Nodal last July in an intimate ceremony in Mexico (a subject she prefers to keep private and not discuss during our interview), and for the first time, she's producing her own music.

"I doubted myself a lot because I had never [produced] before, but I'm figuring out what I want my sound to be," says Ángela, whose father produced all of her previous albums, including her latest, *Bolero*, which was nominated for album of the year at the 2024 Latin Grammy Awards. "At the beginning I was scared, but now I know that this album is me. It's also scary to think if it goes well, it's because of me, but if it goes badly, it's also because of me.

"This is the first time I'm doing everything myself," she continues. "I'm taking care of the arrangements, choosing the songs, directing myself vocally." And for this project, she's especially focused on supporting other female talent. "Most of the songs on the album are written by Mexican women. It's a full mariachi album, but it is a little bit different; it has a modern twist, some subgenres in mariachi that you are not expecting me to ever sing."

While this may be her first time flying solo, this year's Breakthrough honoree has for a while been on a journey of self-discovery behind the scenes, carefully strategizing how she moves through a genre that has been historically dominated by men. "It's been a process of trial and error," she says. "I'm still figuring out who I want to be and what I want to say."

Her father has consistently encouraged that process. "My dad is the biggest macho ever, but he'll be like, '*Vas mijita*. You can do it.' Or he'll tell me, 'You're

Aguilar photographed Feb. 26 at
Agave Estates in Katy, Texas.

not singing good enough, you have to be better.' It prepares you to take on the world."

Ángela made her stage debut as a toddler when she joined Pepe at one of his concerts. Five years later, at age 8, she released her first album, a joint set with her older brother Leonardo Aguilar. The two later joined Pepe on back-to-back arena tours when he launched Jaripeo Sin Fronteras in 2018, honoring the *jaripeo*-style show — singing while riding horses — that their grandparents pioneered. Along the way, Ángela landed three No. 1 songs on *Billboard*'s Regional Mexican Airplay chart and four top 10 hits on Latin Airplay, including her first No. 1 on that chart, "Por el Contrario," with Leonardo and Becky G, last year.

"No one really asked me if I wanted to do this," she says when reflecting on her start in music and her journey from child star to regional Mexican fixture. "It just happened and I'm happy it was that way. When you're younger, you don't realize how huge this is. I just thought it was fun getting to dress up and sing with my grandparents or dad and then everyone clapped for me. But when I was around 10 years old, I fell in love with performing and I thought, 'This is what I'm here for.' "

With her grandmother's vibrant falsetto and a mesmerizing, regal presence onstage, Ángela makes even the difficult skill of singing on horseback look effortless. As might be expected for someone from a family of born performers, she is extremely disciplined and has a strict routine: Besides training to sing on horseback, she sings while running or dancing to build her vocal projection and physical energy. But her diligence hasn't stopped her talented family from giving her their opinion.

"It's constructive criticism," Ángela says with a smirk. "We don't see each other as often so when we do, it's like, whoa, they definitely catch me up on their feedback. I'm in the studio working on my new album and I showed my mom one of the songs — it was literally a demo on a voice note — and my mom was like, 'You have to open your mouth when you sing because I don't understand what you're saying.' And my dad is the same way. It really helps me. I don't want people to tell me something is good when it isn't. There's a lot of yes men in the industry, so the best thing in the world is to have a whole family who is part of this artistic life."

Her mother, Aneliz Aguilar, is also her manager, and has been pivotal in helping Ángela navigate the industry. "Having her by my side has saved me," Ángela says. "She has taken care of me in this industry that is so difficult for young women, so difficult to have your voice heard. She'll also ask how I'm feeling or if I'm emotionally prepared for something. I mean, she's my mommy, I love to have her with me. From the dresses she would make for me when I was little to now showing me how to be a woman, I've learned so much from her."

Mid-conversation, another important family member enters the screen. "Look at Gordo," she says, picking up the family's Instagram-famous 4-year-old pug. "He's going to be a dad — my [other] doggie is pregnant, and she will have *pugsitos* with Gordo. I'm going to be a grandma." (A couple of weeks after our interview, five adorable pugsitos arrive.) Then she adds with a shrug, "Actually, it's weird because my dad says Gordo is my brother but he's having babies with my dog, who is my daughter. I'm not sure what that makes me."

But for now, figuring out this family tree will have to wait: Ángela is headed back to the studio to keep working on her new album. "I'm getting out of my comfort zone but still honoring my roots and traditions. I just turned 21, so it's kind of like exploring where I want my career to take me."

Long photographed Dec. 13, 2024, in Los Angeles.

Styling by Karen Levitt
Temperley London top, pants and coat; Paumé Los Angeles earrings.

Rising Star

Muni Long

BY GAIL MITCHELL

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JOELLE GRACE TAYLOR

IN 2019, PRISCILLA RENEA'S solo career was stalled. She had released an album in 2009, and when it didn't chart, she had turned to songwriting. Her second album, released in 2018, also failed to make much of an impact. So, Renea decided, a rebrand was in order.

For her new moniker, "I picked Melrose at first. That was terrible, a very short phase," the 36-year-old recalls with a laugh. "Then I quickly settled on [the word] 'money' and went through a few last names like Money Jones, Money Smith. But when I heard the 2 Chainz lyric 'hair long, money long' [from 2012's "I'm Different"], I was like, 'Whoa. That's it.' "

Two years later, the artist now known as Muni Long hit the jackpot. Her seductive smash "Hrs and Hrs," initially featured on her 2021 EP, *Public Displays of Affection*, went viral on TikTok and became the then-indie artist's first No. 1 on *Billboard*'s Hot R&B Songs chart. In February 2022, it peaked at No. 16 on the Billboard Hot 100 — and helped her land a contract with Def Jam Recordings (through her own imprint, then called Supergiant, now rechristened Muni Long Inc.). In September 2022, the hit appeared on her debut set, *Public Displays of Affection: The Album*, and won the artist her first Grammy Award, for best R&B performance, at the 2023 ceremony. At the 2025 awards, she won the same Grammy trophy for "Made for Me (Live at BET)" — and declared onstage during her acceptance speech, "Please stop calling me Priscilla... It's Muni Long now!"

This page: Kris Marán jacket, Vex Latex fishnets, On Aura Tout Vu earrings, Le Silla shoes.

Opposite page: Dolce & Gabbana dress, On Aura Tout Vu cuffs and earrings.

HAIR BY JAY. MAKEUP BY DENISE CAMACHO.

Genny romper, Wolford tights.

Jennie photographed Oct. 25, 2024, in Seoul.

Styling by Park Min Hee
Alexander McQueen coat, David Koma top.

Global Force

Jennie

BY LYNDSEY HAVENS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY SONGYI YOON

WHEN JENNIE POSTED the long-awaited trailer announcing her debut solo album, *Ruby*, she was on a plane heading to London. “It’s hard for me to stay longer than a week in one city,” she confesses — while in the car en route to yet another flight (this time from Los Angeles back home to Seoul).

Jennie chose the commanding “Zen” to soundtrack the album’s January trailer, particularly highlighting the lyric “In the dark I grew,” a sentiment that echoes throughout *Ruby*. “To me, that song is the core of this album,” she says. “So it only felt right to begin this journey with it.”

The album, which is entirely in English and arrived March 7, was preceded by singles “Mantra”; “Love Hangover,” with Dominic Fike; and “ExtraL,” with Doechii; and its other features — including genre-spanning artists such as Dua Lipa, Childish Gambino and Kali Uchis — further illustrate Jennie’s wide-ranging taste and global appeal. As a jet-setting artist with a devoted worldwide fan base firmly in place thanks to her role in history-making K-pop act Blackpink, Jennie is determined to build upon that on her own. (She released *Ruby* on her independent label, OddAtelier, in partnership with Columbia.) “It feels like my power as a superhero,” this year’s Global Force says. “It drives me to put more great things out there and work hard.”

You already have a global fan base thanks to Blackpink. How did that benefit you on your solo journey?

If anything, I’m reintroducing myself to the world with this album. I’m throwing myself out there as if this was the very first time — that’s the commitment that I told myself. So I don’t think it changes so much for me.

You’ve adopted the middle name of Ruby Jane. How did that inspire the album title?

I was contemplating until the very end. I didn’t name [the album] *Ruby* because it’s a part of my name. To me, *Ruby* speaks to me as the curtain call of a play, where I’m opening this new chapter of… I don’t want to say new life; life is life, but a different stage in my life and I’m welcoming everyone in. I don’t necessarily see Jennie, Ruby, Jane as three different alter egos of mine. That’s just who I am, all in one.

You released a lyric breakdown of “Love Hangover” in Korean. Why was that important for you to do?

I love the fact that I’m Korean, so I’m just showing my appreciation and giving back the love that [my Korean fans] give me, and I wanted them to understand my music and myself better since this is an all-English album. And I know that they want to be more interactive with me in both languages.

What lyrics on *Ruby* best sum up how this journey has felt for you?

There’s a song that speaks to me in that sense called “Starlight,” and I think it’s a beautifully written song about how I felt for all this time. It’s a personal song.

Dua Lipa is featured on “Handlebars.” Tell me about that friendship.

I’ve known Dua for a very long time now. I went to her first show in Korea. We’re already good friends, [but] it was our first time doing a song together. That itself was a new experience for us to see each other in a different way, and we just had a great time.

Between you two, who do you think travels more?

Honestly, we both work hard.

Behind the scenes, you have a strong team of women helping run your label. Why was that important to you?

I consider it to be important to work with people that you share good energy with, and I naturally started to gravitate toward empowering women. I’m still working hard to become one of those women that I look up to myself. b

HAIR BY GABE SIN. MAKEUP BY LEE SOL. CREATIVE DIRECTION BY WOO LEE.

Annakiki dress

Executives Of The Year

BY KATIE BAIN

Jenna Adler
Lucy Dickins
Samantha Kirby Yoh
Cara Lewis
Marsha Vlasic

Kirby Yoh's clients include LCD Soundsystem, Björk, Rosalía, FKA twigs and St. Vincent.

COURTESY OF UTA

AS THE CONCERT BUSINESS SOARS to new heights, five of its most powerful women have been on a tear. As leading agents across five top booking agencies, Jenna Adler, Lucy Dickins, Samantha Kirby Yoh, Cara Lewis and Marsha Vlasic serve as tour architects and chief dealmakers to the stars, shaping the live-music landscape while helping their artist clients build their brands and broaden their businesses beyond music to sustain their careers.

With her client Adele, Dickins helped create a 75,000-capacity Munich venue purpose-built for the superstar's 10 August 2024 shows (and aptly named Adele Arena). "I don't think anyone else has ever done that," Dickins jokes over Zoom. Lewis famously got a shoutout in 1987's "Paid in Full," on which Eric B. and Rakim explain, "Cara Lewis is our agent ... and together we get paid in full." The hip-hop touring powerhouse's wins go back decades — and include moments like Eminem's first-ever show outside Detroit in 1999.

When we speak, Adler has just returned home from a trip to Dubai with her client Jennifer Lopez and expounds on the new heights that Deftones — "the first band I ever signed" — are currently achieving. Vlasic casually mentions that "Neil" — as in longtime client Neil Young — recently called to discuss his upcoming coastal tour. And Kirby Yoh is keen to chat about LCD Soundsystem's recent Los Angeles and New York residencies, which encompassed 20 shows and which she booked for the band that she has helped guide through arenas, festival headlining slots and beyond over the years.

Their rosters are deep, their wins are many, and their reputations as leaders not just in the "female agent space" but the world of agents, period, are renowned. While each works for a different company — Kirby Yoh is a UTA partner and its co-head of global music, Dickins is WME's global head of contemporary music and touring, Adler is a music touring agent at CAA, Lewis is founder and CEO of Cara Lewis Group, and Vlasic is the co-chair of Independent Artist Group's music division — there's a clear kinship among them, with the five women throwing out adjectives like "legendary," "chic," "magnificent" and "respected" when referring to one another.

"I hate losing," Adler says. "But at the same time, I'd rather lose to one of them than to any of my male counterparts."

Here, the five discuss their long careers, juggling their professions with motherhood and how agencies are changing for artists and female executives alike.

In terms of working with well-established touring acts, how do you guide an artist through a long career? How do you manage demand as an artist evolves?

SAMANTHA KIRBY YOH The No. 1 thing is partnering with an artist. You've really got to listen to what their vision is, what their priorities and concerns are. Those change over the years. Cyndi Lauper had a lifelong dream of playing an arena tour. She'd never done arenas and also wanted to do a spectacular presentation in regard to her life's work. It's not guiding so much as listening and then putting it together and being in true partnership with the manager and artist.

JENNA ADLER You can't just be a transactional agent. It's never going to last that way. You have to be really passionate because at the end of the day, we're selling.

CARA LEWIS Once an artist's fan base has solidified, doors open. It is about coming up with different opportunities that align with that artist to further enhance the brand and continue adding to their longevity. That can be as simple as playing larger venues, adding a sponsor or doing a brand partnership that increases awareness and grows the fan base ... The ultimate goal is longevity and the ability to reinvent and hold fans' attention throughout the evolution of a career.

MARSHA VLASIC To be honest with you, it's not mathematics and it's not chemistry. It's pretty much instinct. I'm very confident in telling [artists] what I think they should do. I'm not afraid of them. A lot of people tiptoe around artists. Even certain managers are afraid to talk to their own artists. But once you go through a certain number of years and earn a certain amount of respect, then artists reach out to you and trust you.

LUCY DICKINS It's about building a strong, authentic relationship. I need to understand an artist's vision and figure out how to tell that story. From when we're starting to work together to when they become huge clients, authenticity is, for me, the most important thing because I think people can see through [anything inauthentic].

What's your philosophy on artist development?

DICKINS You've got to build a solid foundation that allows them to grow, experiment and evolve, while they're also grounded and true to what they are. It's not one size fits all. My thing is always just focusing on empowering them with the tools, knowledge and support they need to make informed decisions and trust their instincts. I'm a gut person, so for me, it's like, "Go with what you want and just be authentic."

VLASIC I worry about taking that leap of faith too quick, too big, and then you're fucked. Artist development to me is turning people away, selling out, having a great show ... Again, a lot of it is instinct.

> "[The agency world] has become more supportive to women, but there's still a lot more to do. There need to be more opportunities, full stop. But we're getting there."
>
> —KIRBY YOH

LEWIS Throughout my career, I have always been at the forefront of artist development, championing female artists. In the early stages of an artist's career, you have to know how to capture the urgency, which is all about strategically planning based on artist analytics, packaging and, of course, ticket pricing.

KIRBY YOH My philosophy is to listen and tell the story of who they are. If there is a deep love in regard to beats, it's about where we can get them DJ'ing in the warehouse and doing a remix. Every step and play have to be intentional and authentically build on the lore of who they are. And don't miss steps. You have to do the steps to build your community with you so they feel they're on the journey with you all the way.

Lewis'

clients include Eminem, Travis Scott, Erykah Badu, Khalid and Don Toliver.

Are festivals still effective in breaking new artists?

ADLER For me, it's about the long game and not taking festival money so fast, not even looking at festivals until we have a bit of control over where we want to play. I always say we should never play a festival before four o'clock because before four, you're playing for the vanity of it. Instead, let's go out and do the hard work and create our own fan base so we can point to a scoreboard and say, "I sold this and that out. This isn't a favor." I don't care about doing all these festivals. There are always exceptions, but my go-to is not worrying about being on a poster in a [small font size] just to say we're there. Let's go and sell out a 300-seat club.

VLASIC I don't know what else we have to break a new artist. Having an artist's name on a festival poster is very important. All promoters look at who's on there, and at least the emerging artists can play to a bigger audience than they would if they went on the club scene and did 300 a night.

> "Throughout my career, I have always been at the forefront of artist development, championing female artists."
>
> —LEWIS

LAURA ROSE

Vlasic's clients include Neil Young, The Strokes, Cage the Elephant, Norah Jones and Elvis Costello.

KIRBY YOH I love festivals. It depends on what festival it is. The smaller festivals, like the 20,000-capacity, are doing great. If you look at [San Francisco dance festival] Portola and [festival creator] Danny [Bell's] exceptional skill set as a curator, it doesn't even break artists but brings people who only heard of X, Y or Z DJ and then they suddenly hear the artists that inspired that DJ. It takes them on a kind of learning [journey]. [Portola] has done that exceptionally.

DICKINS I think it's arguable to say if a festival breaks an artist, whereas before it used to be really important. Now a lot of artists on the way up ask if it's more important to do their own show and build their own brand. If you're in the opening slot on a stage or up against a load of clashes, what are you really getting out of that? I don't know. As opposed to doing your own show with your core fan base or attracting people coming to see you build your brand.

But if you're a bigger artist, they're still huge milestones because they bring massive exposure and the chance to reach global audiences. And there are smaller festivals, or genre-specific festivals, that are becoming more prominent. Doechii played Camp Flog Gnaw last year; that was a huge moment. The big ones are good for the bigger ones, and the more bespoke, genre-specific ones are becoming more prominent for the smaller artists.

How are you seeing artists handle ticket pricing? In regard to the all-in approach where customers only see the final cost, is it important for fans to know the face value that artists are charging before ticketing fees?

VLASIC None of my artists want fans to be pissed off because they think they're charging too much. The thing is, somebody's going to be miserable about something all the time. That's my feeling on ticket pricing. With older artists, where it may be their last tours, they don't want to go out just for the fun of being on the road. The road is no longer something [those artists] are dying to do, but this is their means of income. They don't want to piss people off, but they want to maximize it.

> "When I was starting out, I didn't know I was any different. I didn't know people viewed me as 'You're one of the only women.' I just worked hard and was determined."
>
> —VLASIC

LEWIS It all depends on artist, market, viability and urgency. Keep prices low, within reason and without compromising [an artist's] ability to tour and offer an innovative production. Be cognizant of ticketing fees. Know what the competitive acts are charging and make an analysis of the sales and how the scaling is related to the result. Understand that each market has different needs due to the economy and different urgency.

DICKINS International markets tend to be much more cautious [than in the United States]. But ticket fees are a huge thing. At the International Live Music Conference in London, everyone was telling me that there are major concerns around ticket fees and the lack of transparency because fans feel misled when those additional fees are tacked on at checkout.

KIRBY YOH I think most artists want the experience to be as easy as possible.

Adler's clients include Jennifer Lopez, Doja Cat, Charli xcx, Shaboozey and Green Day.

VLASIC: KAT STANAS. ADLER: MYLES HENDRIK.

When you go to buy a ticket for your favorite artist's show and you've got $100 in your pocket, you want the total checkout cost to be $100.

ADLER I am so sensitive to ticket pricing because I look around like, "How can all these people afford all these shows?" Yet every show is selling out, even though the average ticket price is north of $100. I always try to go on the lower side, almost to a fault. I get a lot of pushback because they say I'm leaving money for scalpers to come in. I don't want that. It's such a delicate balance.

You're all so well established. How has your job changed over the years?

ADLER The biggest difference I see is that now the artist wants a relationship with their whole team. When I started, none of the agents had direct relationships with their artists. Agents always had to go through a manager. Now artists want to be able to pick up the phone and talk to their agent.

DICKINS When I was first booking tours, there was a load of in-market stuff you never paid much attention to that now you do because the look goes everywhere. Your first look is really important because that can play into stuff later on in a career. It's way more involved, much more detail-oriented and much more strategic.

LEWIS Social media has changed our lives. It is the key to it all and has changed the way we market and sell everything. Professional networking platforms have given us resources to connect with anyone at any time about anything.

VLASIC I think the pandemic changed things more than how long I've been in the business. Since the pandemic, the whole structure of the business is different in terms of the back-office stuff. I have a beautiful office. I rarely go there. I don't have a schedule. Maybe I've always beat my own drum in terms of being at a company, but the company structure and routine have changed drastically.

Most of you have children. What is it like doing your job as a mother?

VLASIC I don't know how I did it. I seriously don't. I didn't have family that I could call at any given moment. My husband had his own thing going. I went home almost every night, made sure they had dinner and the homework was done, and then I went out. I don't know how the girls do it now, but the difference is, if you're an agent at most companies, you don't have to be in the office for a certain amount of hours like I did. I remember one time one of my sons was really sick, and I was staying home to get the test results from the doctor ... My boss at the time called me and said, "I hope you realize you should be working regular hours," knowing my son was sick. That wouldn't happen now.

ADLER I have 23- and 25-year-old sons, and CAA allowed me to [raise them] with such seamless patience. They were incredibly supportive even before it was a thing. I nursed every day, my kids came in, but that was because [CAA managing director] Rob Light had five kids, and he was a great dad. He understood. All the guys here had kids and understood it was family first. I was really lucky in that way.

DICKINS As a female agent, the sacrifices I have to make with a young family are huge. It's something I battle on a daily basis. I got back from London two days ago. I go to Australia on Sunday, I come back for one day, then I go to London for two days. When I look at men in my positions, they don' t have the guilt that I have ... My husband deserves a fucking award because he has to hold the fort all the time. When my 9-year-old is crying because she doesn't want me to go away and I have to go because I have to spend time with a client, it's tough. I think that's why, in the touring aspect, it's especially hard for women.

In recent years, it feels like the glass ceiling has been broken in agenting, and your careers are a testament to that. Does that feel true? How could this world be more supportive of women?

VLASIC When I was starting out, I didn't know I was any different. I didn't know people viewed me as "You're one of the only women." I just worked hard and was determined. There are times I'll come off a panel and a young girl will come up and say, "It's so hard for us as women." I'm thinking, "What the fuck are you talking about?" There are more women agents, more women managers, more women musicians. Don't use that as an excuse.

"It's taken a long time to change the narrative of 'She can't be in leadership because she doesn't get along with so-and-so.' "

—ADLER

Dickins'

clients include Adele, Billie Eilish, Olivia Rodrigo, James Blake and Lola Young.

"When my 9-year-old is crying because she doesn't want me to go away and I have to go because I have to spend time with a client, it's tough. I think that's why, in the touring aspect, it's especially hard for women."

—DICKINS

KIRBY YOH I think it has become more supportive to women, but there's still a lot more to do. There need to be more opportunities, full stop. But we're getting there. More people are hiring women. More people are empowering them with tools and skills, and more of us are pulling our sisters with us in a good way, like, "Come to the studio with me. Come to the show."

LEWIS [*Billboard*'s] Women in Music [has] been an amazing platform not only honoring the talent but also bringing awareness to the behind-the-scenes executives pushing the industry forward. We need more of this. When you put your heart and soul into all that you do and succeed at it, it should raise you up, not keep you stagnant at a company.

ADLER It used to be that the males would pit us against each other because the women weren't close to each other and there were very few slots. It's taken a long time to change the narrative of "She can't be in leadership because she doesn't get along with so-and-so."

I don't know if I should say this, but I'm going to. Women in Music is such a powerful issue. There are few places to celebrate what we do. On the other hand, I say to myself, "But I should be part of the overall list." I play with the boys every single day. I appreciate all of it and it means so much to me, but that's where I am today: I love my female sisterhood, but I can also play with everybody.

COURTESY OF WME

Hall Of Fame

These former Executive of the Year honorees were recognized as leaders among their peers in prior years

2024

Michelle Jubelirer

Founder, Soft Shock Media Collective

As Capitol Music Group chair/CEO from 2021 to 2024, Jubelirer was the first female chief executive in the company's 80-plus-year history. The veteran music attorney stepped down from that role last winter amid restructuring and began to write the next chapter of her career. Building on her decades of work with artists from Katy Perry to Ice Spice, her new Soft Shock Media Collective upholds her legacy of centering artist advocacy above all. She describes her greatest professional achievement of the past year as "embracing the unfamiliar so I could build something meaningful with artists at the center."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "You must help build the world you want, and it's OK to start small. Don't let inaction lead you to despair while you wait for someone else to show up with a solution."

2023

Sylvia Rhone

Chairwoman/CEO, Epic Records

Epic's commitment to nurturing generational talent led to the label's achievements in the past year. Travis Scott, Future and 21 Savage were leaders on the hip-hop front, "creating massive cultural impact by pushing musical, fashion and digital boundaries," Rhone says. South African artist Tyla's Grammy-winning breakthrough "transformed global music through her masterful fusion of *amapiano* and R&B," while singer-songwriters Meghan Trainor, Madison Beer and Zara Larsson also made impressive showings. Positioned at the forefront of the label's next-gen rap roster in 2025: Real Boston Richey. "Together," Rhone says, "these artists embody Epic's culture of artistic excellence."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "While I don't have perfect answers, here are some things I remind myself to do: Take conscious breaths. Make sleep a sacred priority. Most crucially, schedule disconnection time with the same rigor you schedule your meetings — it's a shield against burnout."

JUBELIRER: JOHN MICHAEL FULTON. RHONE: CHRISTOPHER PATEY.

2022

Golnar Khosrowshahi

Founder/CEO, Reservoir Media

While Reservoir Media invests money in music catalogs, the company also has a roster of songwriters and performing artists. Those songwriters, partners and artists garnered 31 nominations for this year's Grammy Awards, according to the company. In 2024, Reservoir inked deals with such luminaries as Snoop Dogg, Kings of Leon, Aaron Zuckerman and the singer known best for her 1992 hit, "Constant Craving," k.d. lang. "Welcoming the trailblazer and once-in-a-generation voice k.d. lang to the company was a defining moment for me personally," Khosrowshahi says. "As a fellow Canadian, I am particularly proud she now calls Reservoir her creative home."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Find expression through music or art, either creating it yourself or consuming something that will ground you. But if all else fails, a good scream will usually do the trick."

2021

Brianna Agyemang

Co-founder, The Show Must Be Paused

Jamila Thomas

Co-founder, The Show Must Be Paused; CEO, Big Boss Group

It has been over four years since music marketing executives Thomas (then Motown Records vp of artist marketing) and Agyemang (then senior artist campaign manager at Apple's Platoon) brought the music business to a standstill on June 2, 2020, when they launched #TheShowMustBePaused. The initiative, a call to combat racial injustice across the industry, spurred engagement, amplification and empowerment of Black and diverse voices. Agyemang is currently taking a pause, while this past year Thomas launched her own agency, Big Boss Group, to provide "a space for artists, creatives and partners to think big and create campaigns that are impactful and cut through to speak directly to the consumer," she says.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Ground yourself first and foremost," Agyemang says. "You have to secure your life vest before you can help others."

Agyemang

Thomas

2019

Desiree Perez

CEO, Roc Nation

For Roc Nation, every year begins with the Super Bowl halftime show, and 2024's Usher performance was the most watched in history, with an average of 129.3 million viewers, according to Nielsen — until Kendrick Lamar's performance in February bested it with 133.5 million viewers. Lamar's Super Bowl appearance occurred as the Compton, Calif., rapper is coming off the biggest year of his career. But Perez's artists at Roc Nation succeeded across the board: Megan Thee Stallion's Hot Girl Summer Tour raked in $40.2 million and she was feted at the 2024 Golden Heart Awards for her philanthropy; Alicia Keys was honored with the Grammys' Dr. Dre Global Impact Award and her *Hell's Kitchen* stage show made its way to Broadway (scoring two wins out of its 13 Tony nominations and a Grammy victory for best musical theater album); and Roc Nation founder Jay-Z published the coffee-table book *The Book of HOV*.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Don't conform, stay disciplined, and say what you think."

2018

Danielle Aguirre

Executive vp/general counsel, National Music Publishers' Association

Aguirre shared recognition as Executive of the Year in 2018 with Jacqueline Charlesworth, Susan Genco and Dina LaPolt for their support of the Music Modernization Act. At the NMPA, she keeps fighting for songwriters and publishers. "Two big things my team has been focused on this year is the fight against Spotify's bad-faith move to significantly reduce songwriter royalties by reclassifying its music offerings as bundles and our lawsuit against Twitter/X for its refusal to license the music on its platform," she says. "Both companies have shown a continued disregard for the importance of songwriters' contributions to the success of their platforms and a failure to fairly pay for songs."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "There are more opportunities than ever for smart, strong, focused women in the music industry. Work hard, network, and don't get discouraged. Your opportunity is just around the corner."

KHOSROWSHAHI: RICH POLK FOR BILLBOARD. AGYEMANG: BILLBOARD. THOMAS: FLO NGALA. PEREZ: ANDREW ZAEH. AGUIRRE: GREGG DEGUIRE FOR BILLBOARD.

2018

Jacqueline Charlesworth

Partner, Frankfurt Kurnit Klein & Selz

It's been a year of change for Charlesworth, who segued from Charlesworth Law (a music and copyright boutique firm she founded and operated for five years in Los Angeles) to a position as partner at Frankfurt Kurnit Klein & Selz. The one-time general counsel of the U.S. Copyright Office, who specializes in copyright disputes and complex licensing deals for clients, including leading music companies, songwriters and recording artists, describes the firm as "the perfect home for my music and copyright practice." Her recent work includes representing a songwriter and artists in a suit against a California politician who used their songs in campaign ads, defeating the politician's claim of fair use on summary judgment.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "As Eleanor Roosevelt once said: 'Do one thing every day that scares you.' "

CHARLESWORTH: CLAES LILJA. GENCO: TIMOTHY NORRIS. LAPOLT: BONNIE SCHIFFMAN. SAINT JOHN: EUGENE GOLOGURSKY/GETTY IMAGES.

2018

Susan Genco

Co-president, The Azoff Company

Genco says that in the past year, she has been "inspired by the success of Iconic Artists Group," the Azoff Company division that partners with artists to "protect, curate and develop their legacy," as it defines itself. Genco is co-president of the company with Elizabeth Collins (see page 105), and Iconic Artists Group COO Hildi Snodgrass is also a Women in Music honoree (see page 107). The results of Iconic Artists Group "speak for themselves," Genco says. "I love knowing that the impact of incredible artists like The Beach Boys, Cher and Nat 'King' Cole will continue to be appreciated by fans for years to come thanks to the Iconic Artists team."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Women need to come together and support one another consistently and constantly. Find your mentors, build your network, and don't let go of either."

Dina LaPolt

Founder, LaPolt Law

Whether it's representing clients such as Steven Tyler, Cardi B, 21 Savage, deadmau5 or the estate of Tupac Shakur; championing the music creator community in connection with policy reform; or standing up for organizations including Songwriters of North America and the Black Music Action Coalition, LaPolt is a tireless advocate. In February, she launched LaPolt Media, a business that encompasses *The Stiletto Room*, which she calls "my no-holds-barred podcast where I sit down with trailblazers and troublemakers to get real about the battles we fight and the victories we earn." Her first book, *Street Smart*, is due this fall; she describes it as "part war manual, part master class." Says LaPolt: "This isn't just a book — it's a playbook for taking on the world and winning."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "You need balance. I've been sober for over 25 years, and that foundation has been key to staying clear, focused and present. Find what keeps you grounded and make it nonnegotiable."

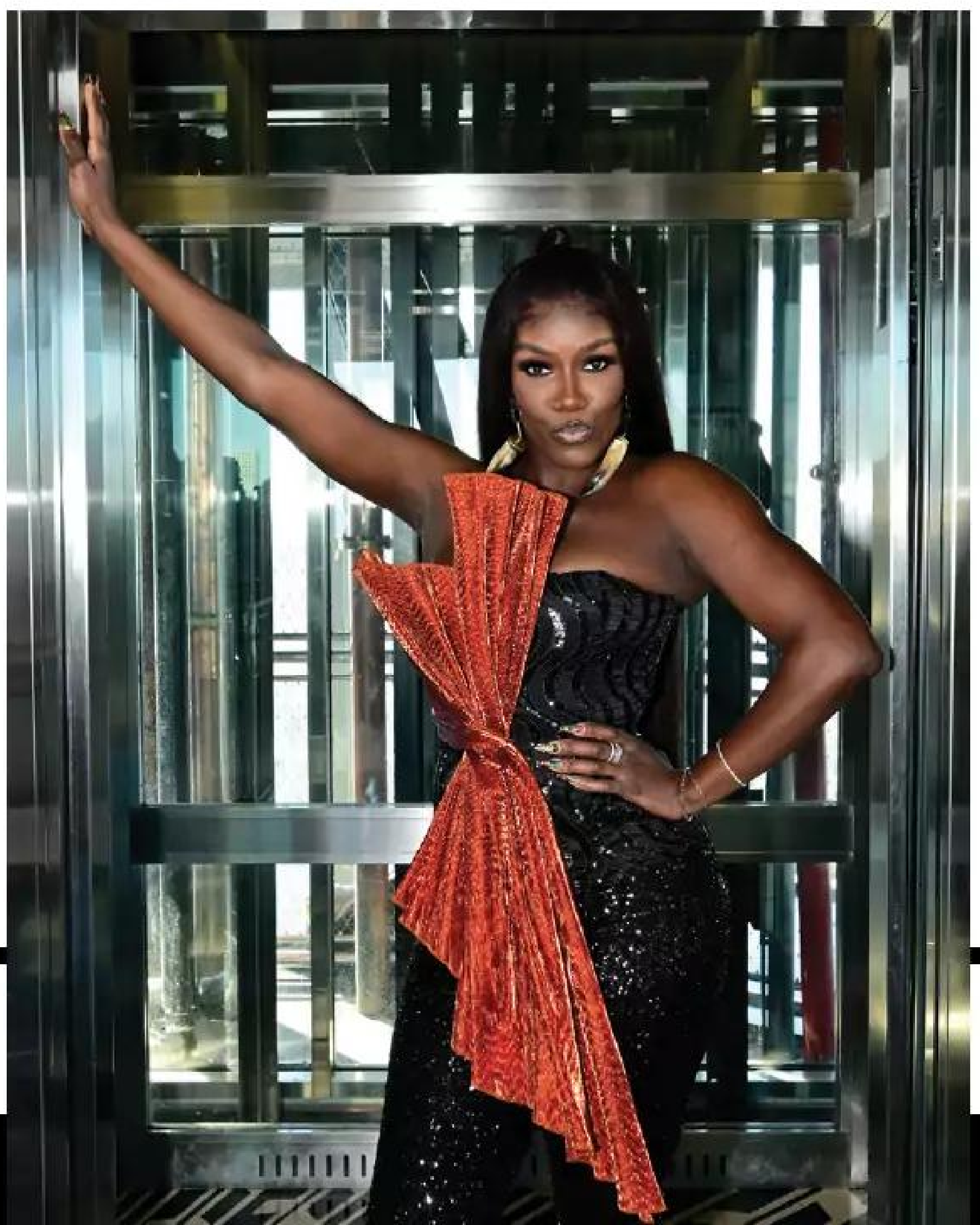
2016

Bozoma Saint John

Creator/CEO, Eve by Boz

A master brand-builder, Saint John has demonstrated her prowess across numerous industries. She was named *Billboard*'s Women in Music Executive of the Year as head of global consumer marketing for iTunes and Apple Music, and she has since held roles at Endeavor, Uber and, most recently, Netflix, from 2020 to 2022. Saint John published a memoir, *The Urgent Life*, in 2023 and joined the cast of *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills* in 2024. Her latest enterprise is one she can entirely call her own: launching the Eve by Boz line of hair and hair care products. "Eve by Boz is not just a brand," she says. "It's a movement that celebrates the beauty, resilience and diversity of Black women and women of color worldwide."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Leave! If the stress can't be managed, you have to leave."



2015

Jody Gerson

Chairman/CEO, Universal Music Publishing Group

Gerson started off 2025 with a bang when Universal Music Group announced it had signed a deal with Spotify, affecting the company's recorded-music and publishing royalty rates. This deal made UMPG the first company to strike a direct deal with Spotify since the passage of the Music Modernization Act, and sources say the agreement provides better remuneration for UMPG and its writers than before. Given that Spotify essentially cut its publishing royalty payouts for publishers and songwriters in the United States last year by an estimated $150 million, Gerson's deal with the service has allowed UMPG to find a new solution to improve the U.S. rate.

CHARITY I SUPPORT "I am proud of my involvement with She Is the Music, as it's more important than ever to support and promote women in the music industry."

2014

Michele Anthony

Executive vp, Universal Music Group

Many of the female pop superstars that dominated 2024 are on UMG labels, including Chappell Roan, GloRilla, Doechii and Sabrina Carpenter. These women "will inspire and influence the next generation of artists and songwriters," Anthony says. Their successes helped land UMG's REPUBLIC Collective and Interscope Capitol Labels Group the Nos. 1 and 2 spots, respectively, on *Billboard*'s year-end 2024 Top Labels chart. UMG's broad success is "a testament to our labels' unparalleled commitment to investing in artists across all genres, from pop to hip-hop, country to K-pop, continuing to shape culture globally."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Right now, federal legislative protection is disappearing on a range of critical issues — climate change, protection of voting rights, women's reproductive rights and LGBTQ+ protections. My advice to young women is to get involved on a state and local level for the issues you care the most about."

2006

Julie Greenwald

Former chairman/CEO, Atlantic Music Group

Greenwald calls 2024 "the year of Charli xcx. We were all living in *brat* world." But there was more for Atlantic: "Coldplay achieved a No. 1 album, and Bruno Mars returned with back-to-back smashes, including the global hit 'APT.' featuring Atlantic newcomer Rosé," which broke the record for most weeks atop the Billboard Global Excl. U.S. chart. "The Marías, Don Toliver, Ravyn Lenae and Alex Warren also finished the year out super strong and are continuing to excel in '25," Greenwald says. Though she recently exited Atlantic, she remains "proud of both the old and new Atlantic teams," adding, "No one missed a beat on artist campaigns." (Greenwald was also named Executive of the Year in 2008, 2010-13 and 2017.)

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Growing up in this business is hard. Find yourself fellow women who can be in your corner for support and camaraderie. They will make the journey better."

Morga
MAKERS
yahoo!
VS&Co
KERS

2005

Judy McGrath

Former CEO, MTV Networks

One of the media pioneers behind MTV's emergence and dominance as a cultural institution, Emmy Award winner McGrath spent three decades at the channel's parent company, MTV Networks. On her watch, the original music video channel was joined by sister outlets including MTV2, VH1, Logo, Nickelodeon, Nick at Nite, Comedy Central, TV Land and Spike. She left MTV Networks in 2011 and, in partnership with Sony Music, launched Astronauts Wanted: No Experience Necessary, which brought Sony artists into the TV, internet and mobile realms. She has also served on the boards of Amazon and the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. (McGrath was also named Executive of the Year in 2007 and 2009.)

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "I think the best advice I can give is, do lots of different things along the way," McGrath has previously said. "Have an open mind. Be a passionate fan. Learn something about management. Learn something about business."

GERSON: JOHN MICHAEL FULTON. GREENWALD: NOA GRIFFEL. ANTHONY: COURTESY OF UMG. MCGRATH: RODIN ECKENROTH/GETTY IMAGES.

KACEY MUSGRAVES' 2024 album, *Deeper Well*, debuted at No. 1 on Top Album Sales and also ruled the Country, Americana/Folk and Vinyl Albums charts.

EMMA MCINTYRE/GETTY IMAGES

Music Groups

Towalame Austin
GLOBAL EXECUTIVE VP, PHILANTHROPY, SOCIAL IMPACT AND ENVIRONMENT
Tiffany R. Warren
EXECUTIVE VP OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION
Sony Music Group
Julie Swidler
EXECUTIVE VP OF BUSINESS AFFAIRS/GENERAL COUNSEL
Melissa Thomas
EXECUTIVE VP OF INTERNATIONAL MARKETING, U.S. REPERTOIRE
Stephanie Yu
EXECUTIVE VP OF BUSINESS/LEGAL AFFAIRS LEAD, U.S.
Angela Lopes
SENIOR VP OF STRATEGY AND INVESTMENTS
Sony Music Entertainment

The rapid advance of artificial intelligence presents new challenges for artists and songwriters. "Around the world, musicians are one of the top targets for AI vocal clones and soundalikes, which often intentionally exploit an artist's talent and reputation, steal royalty payments and confuse consumers," Swidler says. "Sony Music works with its global industry partners and trade associations to raise concerns from the copyright community." On top of that, Sony Music "activated its companywide environmental framework" in 2024, Austin says. This illustrates the organization's "commitment to building a legacy of environmental stewardship and responsibility across our operations and within the broader music industry."

CHARITY I SUPPORT "I support Coloring Over Cancer," Austin says, "because it provides comfort and healing not only to cancer patients but also to their caregivers, loved ones and friends."

Carletta Higginson
CHIEF DIGITAL OFFICER/EXECUTIVE VP
Masha Osherova
CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER/EXECUTIVE VP
Warner Music Group
Natalie Madaj
EXECUTIVE VP OF GLOBAL DIGITAL
Warner Music Group/Warner Chappell Music
Elsa Vivero
GM/EXECUTIVE VP OF GLOBAL COMMERCIAL SERVICES
Addie Adeniran
SENIOR VP OF PEOPLE TEAM
Olga LaBelle
VP/HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE
Warner Music Group

In 2024, WMG "made strategic moves across the business to strengthen our ability to deliver for artists and songwriters," Higginson says. The company took savings from layoffs and invested them in additional A&R, embraced a flatter corporate structure to emphasize collaboration and developed partnerships with platforms like Meta and Amazon. Perhaps it's not a coincidence that WMG's roster ended the year with the most listened-to artist on Spotify in Bruno Mars, the No. 1 song on *Billboard*'s year-end 2024 Global 200 chart in Benson Boone's "Beautiful Things," the No. 1 hit on the year-end 2024 Hot 100 in Teddy Swims' "Lose Control" and the No. 1 hit on the year-end 2024 Streaming Songs chart in Zach Bryan's "I Remember Everything."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Balance is key," Higginson says. "Having outlets outside of work — whether it's spending time with friends and family, pursuing hobbies or volunteering — can help you recharge and keep work in perspective."

Richelle Parham
PRESIDENT OF GLOBAL E-COMMERCE AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
Erika Begun
EXECUTIVE VP/HEAD OF INVESTOR RELATIONS
Susan Mazo
EXECUTIVE VP/CHIEF IMPACT OFFICER
Cindy Oliver
EXECUTIVE VP OF GLOBAL REVENUE AND ROYALTY OPTIMIZATION
Kristen Bender
SENIOR VP OF DIGITAL INNOVATION STRATEGY AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
Amy Isbell
SENIOR VP OF PUBLIC POLICY AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
Universal Music Group

UMG had an eventful year in 2024, beginning with the decision last February to remove all of the company's songs from TikTok in a dispute over compensation and online safety. UMG reached a new licensing agreement with the social media platform in May. But it's the ongoing issues as the music industry grapples with AI where Isbell says UMG made the most progress. "Through business strategy, creative vision, protective litigation and public policy advocacy, UMG continues to lead the fight for a responsible AI ecosystem that protects and benefits songwriters, artists and the entire creative community," she says, also highlighting UMG's "response to the Los Angeles wildfires and dedication of resources to help the community."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Every woman on this list has advocated, volunteered or contributed to better our industry in some way," Isbell says. "We're all fiercely competitive businesspeople but still recognize we're all dependent upon the health and vitality of the broader creative ecosystem."

Labels And Distributors

Michelle An
PRESIDENT/HEAD OF CREATIVE STRATEGY
Nicole Wyskoarko
PRESIDENT/HEAD OF URBAN A&R
Laura Carter
EXECUTIVE VP/HEAD OF URBAN MARKETING
Kirsten Stubbs
SENIOR VP/CO-HEAD OF POP/ROCK DIGITAL MARKETING
Interscope Geffen A&M

Nearly three years ago, according to a widely shared video, GloRilla boarded mogul Yo Gotti's jet and accepted a bag reportedly containing $500,000 to sign with his CMG imprint, which had partnered the previous year with pioneering hip-hop label Interscope. In 2024, the investment paid off, as the Memphis rapper's debut album, *Glorious*, hit No. 5 on the Billboard 200, helping Interscope Geffen A&M take the second spot in current market share last year. "Every milestone in GloRilla's career is a testament to her hard work, dedication and exceptional talent," Carter says. "Together with our CMG partner, we set ambitious goals for her debut album and watched her exceed every expectation."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "I've found that maintaining a consistent workout routine," Carter says, "along with stress-relief practices like meditation and deep breathing, significantly reduces daily stress and helps me better navigate work demands."

Rayna Bass
CO-PRESIDENT
300 Entertainment

Bass says 2025 will be the "biggest year" for Young Thug. The rapper was released from jail last October after he pleaded guilty to gang, drug and gun charges, ending the longest-running criminal trial in the history of the state of Georgia. Bass also says this year "will bring continued global success and culture-defining records" for Gunna, who earned his fifth No. 1 on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums with *One of Wun* last May. Jordan Adetunji, who signed with 300 Entertainment and Warner Records U.K. in June, broke out with his single "KEHLANI," which later featured the titular artist on the official remix. The song topped the TikTok Billboard Top 50 and Rhythmic Airplay charts, and the remix earned the British rapper his first Grammy nomination for best melodic rap performance.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Organizing and decluttering always helps me to unwind and brings mental clarity."

Nathalie Besharat
EXECUTIVE VP OF CONTENT OPERATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS
gamma.

This past year, Besharat has played a key role within gamma.'s operation. While only being in business for about two years, the company has a lot to be proud of — most notably Sexyy Red's meteoric rise. "Not long ago, she was an emerging voice, and now she's collaborating with Bruno Mars and dominating the charts," Besharat says. "Watching her go from an underdog to a major force in music has been a testament to the power of belief, strategy and having the right team behind an artist." In the past year, gamma. also signed developing acts including Nami, Maleigh Zan, TRUICE, honestav and Kevin Smiley — "each bringing something fresh and unique to the industry," Besharat says.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Just as important as the work itself is whom you choose to align yourself with. Loyalty is an old-school virtue in this industry and, in my opinion, one that stands the test of time."

Joie Binns
VP OF OPERATIONS
Brittany O'Garro
VP OF MARKETING
CMG

GloRilla's glow-up has been a massive pillar for Yo Gotti's CMG and his team, including Binns and O'Garro. The Memphis superstar had four top 25 hits on the Billboard Hot 100, including the Grammy-nominated single "Yeah Glo!" Her mainstream run reached its apex when she achieved the best first-week total for a female rapper in 2024 with her debut album, *Glorious*, earning 69,000 album equivalent units. "People tried to count Glo out in 2023," Binns says, "but she stayed the course, trusted the process and blossomed into one of the music industry's brightest stars in 2024."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "There is room for all of us to win. Sometimes it feels like the industry wants to pit us against each other, but the only competition is a better version of ourselves," Binns says. "I like to use the phrase 'sticktuativeness' for my mentees: Stick true to yourself and your vision and it will come to pass."

Chelsea Blythe
FORMER EXECUTIVE VP OF A&R
Lori Christian
EXECUTIVE VP OF MARKETING
Universal Music Group Nashville

UMGN has emerged as more of a player in the greater media landscape over the past year, opening its film/TV division, Sing Me Back Home Productions, which launched with the NBC live-network TV special *American Icon: Toby Keith*. The program brought in 4.7 million viewers, according to Nielsen, to celebrate late singer-songwriter Keith. UMGN also relaunched Lost Highway Records, with producer-writer T Bone Burnett teaming with Ringo Starr for a country album, *Look Up*. Meanwhile, UMGN artists including Kacey Musgraves, Parker McCollum, Sam Hunt and Tyler Hubbard earned No. 1s on *Billboard*'s Hot Country Songs and/or Country Airplay chart in 2024. The label had a change in leadership in February when Cindy Mabe left her role as chair/CEO of UMGN. When she was named to the position in April 2023, she became the first woman to serve in the role at a Nashville major-label group. Blythe departed the label earlier in March.

Stacy Blythe
EXECUTIVE VP OF PROMOTION
Sara Knabe
SENIOR VP OF A&R
Candice Watkins
SENIOR VP OF MARKETING
Big Loud Records

Big Loud's artists have notched several chart-toppers in 2024, with Morgan Wallen earning five No. 1s on the Country Airplay chart in a single year — including "Cowgirls" (with labelmate ERNEST), "Lies Lies Lies" and his collaboration with Post Malone on "I Had Some Help" — making him the first act to achieve the feat. HARDY also topped Country Airplay with "Truck Bed." Meanwhile, Big Loud topped the year-end 2024 Hot Country Songs Labels chart thanks to music from a roster that includes Wallen, ERNEST, HARDY, Charles Wesley Godwin, Lauren Alaina, Dylan Gossett, Kashus Culpepper and Ashley Cooke.

CHARITY I SUPPORT "Breakthrough T1D [formerly the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation]," Blythe says. "I lost my cousin at a young age to Type 1 diabetes and am invested in finding a cure."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT

"Every woman on this list has advocated, volunteered or contributed to better our industry in some way. We're all fiercely competitive businesspeople but still recognize we're all dependent upon the health and vitality of the broader creative ecosystem."

—Amy Isbell, senior vp of public policy and government affairs, Universal Music Group

COURTESY OF UMG

Chloe Brake
SENIOR DIRECTOR OF MARKETING STRATEGY

Sarayu Caulfield
SENIOR DIRECTOR OF CREATIVE

Mercury Records

Brake and Caulfield have been an effective tag team at Mercury, expressing their pride in the label's commitment to breaking artists like rising country stars Dylan Gossett and Tucker Wetmore as well as up-and-coming R&B singer Bryant Barnes. Gossett's "Coal" is certified platinum, while Wetmore's "Wind Up Missin' You" hit No. 2 on Country Airplay. Barnes' "I'd Rather Pretend" reached No. 7 on Hot R&B Songs, and his *VANITY* EP hit No. 13 on Heatseekers Albums. "I'm incredibly proud to be a part of a creative and forward-thinking team whose mission is to both break new artists and honor our global superstars," Brake says.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "We are so lucky to work in art and music every single day," Caulfield says. "We were all fans first, so don't forget why we do this and don't forget to put yourself in the fans' shoes daily."

LaTrice Burnette
EXECUTIVE VP/HEAD OF MUSIC AND EVENTS

Traci Tolmaire
HEAD OF ARTIST OPERATIONS

Goldie Harris
DIRECTOR OF COMMERCE

UnitedMasters

UnitedMasters has forged collaborations with artists like Brent Faiyaz and Earthgang while developing talents such as BigXthaPlug, Anycia and Ekkstacy. When the company began working with BigXthaPlug, the Dallas rapper was drawing only 500 monthly listeners on streaming services. Last October, his album *Take Care* debuted at No. 8 on the Billboard 200 and reached No. 5 on Top Streaming Albums with 62.8 million on-demand official streams of its songs. Under Burnette, UnitedMasters has developed its Partner tier, an invite-based service for established artists seeking hands-on support while maintaining independence. The partnership between Chilean singer FloyyMenor and UnitedMasters demonstrates the company's growing influence in Latin music.

CHARITY I SUPPORT "The United Breast Cancer Foundation, because of its unwavering commitment to helping those affected by breast cancer in meaningful, tangible ways," Burnette says. "UBCF ensures that no one has to face this journey alone."

Mina Jungmin Choi
CHIEF GLOBAL OFFICER

Ji Won Kim
CHIEF RELATIONS OFFICER

SM Entertainment

This past year, SM Entertainment K-pop quartet aespa notched its sixth career top 10 entry on the Top Album Sales chart in November with *Whiplash: The 5th Mini Album (EP)*. The company also put its new management strategy, SM 3.0, into practice with groups like RIIZE and NCT WISH, and launched the eight-member girl group Hearts2Hearts in February with debut single "The Chase." In February, SM Entertainment marked its 30th anniversary with a new slogan: "The culture, the future." Along with Kakao Entertainment America and Moon&Back Media, SM also supported British boy band dearALICE, which formed on the BBC series *Made in Korea: K-Pop Experience*.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Having various hobbies will help," Jungmin Choi says. "Just try and make time to get away from work for a moment."

Monica Cornia
SENIOR VP OF MARKETING AND PARTNERSHIPS

Commercial Music Group, Sony Music Entertainment

Since being promoted to her current senior vp role at Sony's Commercial Music Group, Cornia has been tasked with overseeing all U.S. sales strategies for the company's vast catalog of classic and modern artists. In 2024, that included doing a lot of the planning behind Usher's comeback year, including his performance at the Super Bowl halftime show and a 20th-anniversary rerelease of his landmark 2004 album, *Confessions*, and taking advantage of surging interest in Bob Dylan in the wake of his acclaimed *A Complete Unknown* biopic. "It [remains] a privilege to continue Mariah Carey's reign as the queen of Christmas," says Cornia, citing the singer's "All I Want for Christmas Is You," which has reached 3.5 billion global streams.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "I am a big believer in Transcendental Meditation and long walks in nature."

Giselle De Armendi
SENIOR VP OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

Warner Music Latin America

De Armendi's legal guidance played a pivotal role in Warner Music Latina's growth this past year, notably securing agreements with Dominican artist Tokischa, renewing the deal with Puerto Rican rapper Myke Towers and inking an exclusive partnership with Street Mob Records, the indie label founded by Fuerza Regida frontman Jesús Ortiz Paz. The label's roster also includes Calle 24, Clave Especial and Armenta. Additionally, de Armendi expanded the label's presence into Brazil through a strategic partnership with Sua Musica, spearheaded a One World label deal featuring Jon Z's records, facilitated the collaboration between Ovy on the Drums and Towers on the joint EP *Cassette 01* and negotiated catalog acquisitions of Blessd and The Academy.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Tackle the root cause of the stress quickly and efficiently. Maintaining perspective is always helpful."

María Fernández
COO/EXECUTIVE VP

Gaby Martinez
SENIOR VP OF MARKETING

Sony Music Latin-Iberia

Nerea Igualador
SENIOR VP OF DIGITAL BUSINESS

Sony Music U.S. Latin

Rauw Alejandro's *Cosa Nuestra* was a runaway success, debuting at No. 1 on Top Latin Albums in November — and scoring the Puerto Rican artist the largest streaming week of 2024 for a Latin album. The set also debuted at No. 6 on the Billboard 200, marking his highest ranking on the chart. Meanwhile, Shakira scored her 24th Latin Airplay No. 1 with "Soltera," extending her record for the most among women. "These achievements solidify Sony Music Latin-Iberia's position as a leading force in the global music industry," says Fernández, who also notes the company's "groundbreaking" partnership with Messi on his upcoming animated series.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Pursue what makes you happy and fulfilled," Fernández says. "Write your story. Don't let others do it for you. And especially, do not let others tell you who you are or who you should be."

The debut of *brat* by CHARLI XCX at No. 3 on the Billboard 200 in June 2024 was the beginning of the British star dominating the pop culture conversation in the months that followed.

CHRISTOPHER POLK FOR BILLBOARD

Lanre Gaba
PRESIDENT OF HIP-HOP, R&B AND GLOBAL MUSIC
Atlantic Records
Erica Bellarosa
EXECUTIVE VP/HEAD OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS/GENERAL COUNSEL
Atlantic Music Group
Marisa Aron
EXECUTIVE VP/HEAD OF MARKETING FOR POP AND ROCK
Marsha St. Hubert
EXECUTIVE VP/HEAD OF MARKETING FOR HIP-HOP, R&B AND GLOBAL MUSIC
Atlantic Records

Aron calls it an "absolute honor" to work with Atlantic artist Charli xcx, whose *brat* won the best dance/electronic album honor at the Grammy Awards. She delivered "a master class in artistic direction and marketing strategy," Aron says, adding that she's also thrilled to help acts like The Marías, who scored their first solo Hot 100 hit in 2024 with "No One Noticed." The Marías are "a leading force in the indie pop world," Aron says. "Their unique sound and stunning live performances earned them critical acclaim and a dedicated fan base." Most recently, Atlantic's FKA twigs debuted at No. 24 on the Billboard 200 — her highest position to date — with *EUSEXUA*. That success is "a testament to her fearless creativity," Aron says, "and her ability to connect with audiences on a deeply personal level."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Make lists!" Aron says. "There's something incredibly satisfying about checking things off a to-do list."

Wendy Goldstein
PRESIDENT/COO
Danielle Price Sanders
EXECUTIVE VP
Xiarra Diamond
Stephanie Perez
SENIOR VPs OF MARKETING STRATEGY
Republic Records

Ariana Grande's starring role in *Wicked* landed the singer an Academy Award nomination, while the soundtrack garnered the highest debut for a big-screen adaptation of a stage musical ever on the Billboard 200. Nicki Minaj's *Pink Friday 2* tour was the No. 2 rap trek of 2024, grossing nearly $100 million with over 710,000 tickets sold. And Taylor Swift scored a record-breaking 15th No. 1 on the Top Album Sales chart with *Lover: Live From Paris*. "This year, we've seen pop icons continue to dominate and more women than ever are taking on powerful roles across all sectors of the business," Goldstein says. "Our leadership team is composed entirely of women and exemplifies the power we have."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "The best way to unwind and manage stress is by spending time with my dogs," Goldstein says. "They bring a sense of calm and joy that helps me reset, refocus and feel recharged."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT

> "Pursue what makes you happy and fulfilled. Write your story. Don't let others do it for you. And especially, do not let others tell you who you are or who you should be."
>
> —**María Fernández**, COO/executive vp, Sony Music Latin-Iberia

ALESSANDRO MARTINO

Jane Gowen
EXECUTIVE VP OF MARKETING AND A&R
Universal Music Enterprises

Gowen calls UMe's shift to focusing on streaming and catalog music discovery "as exciting as it's ever been." Recent highlights include the spotlighting of tracks such as The Cranberries' "Linger," which was remixed by Chvrches' Iain Cook, and the resurgence of the Yeah Yeah Yeahs' "Maps," which spent eight weeks at No. 1 on the TikTok Billboard Top 50 chart. UMe also oversaw global campaigns for Bob Marley, The Beatles, Elton John, Bon Jovi, the 40th anniversary of Def Jam — and The Beatles' single "Now & Then" won the Grammy Award for best rock performance.

CHARITY I SUPPORT "With the fire disaster in Southern California, it's the American Red Cross. I have also always been a longtime supporter of Save the Children, as it struck a chord with me early on as a charity that has an impact on the future of our children around the world."

Gina Harrell
SENIOR VP/HEAD OF VIDEO PRODUCTION
Chelsea Donnarumma
VP OF COMMERCIAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR COMMERCE
Victoria Huber
SENIOR DIRECTOR OF MARKETING
Epic Records

From Travis Scott and 21 Savage to Meghan Trainor and newcomer Real Boston Richey, 2024 was epic for the label's established and emerging artists. Among those wins is Future's history-making run as the first solo act to earn three No. 1 debuts in six months on the Billboard 200 with the Metro Boomin collaborations *We Don't Trust You* and *We Still Don't Trust You* and his solo release *Mixtape Pluto*. The historic run brings his total of Billboard 200 chart-toppers to 11. Harrell also notes "the meteoric rise" of South Africa's amapiano/R&B star Tyla: "It's really gratifying to see how her cultural impact across music and fashion has illuminated this genre of music on the global stage."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Playing tennis, following all of the exciting new players and attending the major tournaments around the world does it for me," Harrell says.

Karen Hope
SENIOR VP/HEAD OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS
Jen Tanner
SENIOR VP OF GLOBAL BRAND PARTNERSHIPS
Katrin Weber
SENIOR DIRECTOR OF COMMERCIAL PARTNERSHIPS
RCA Records

A host of female artists in multiple genres made a major impact in 2024. And it's the specific role that RCA played in those achievements that Hope highlights, noting the label "embraces and is home to so many strong female artists" such as SZA, Doja Cat, Latto, Blackpink's Lisa, P!nk, Victoria Monét, Tate McRae and Debbii Dawson. "Their voices and music inspire women throughout the world," she adds. "We closed out 2024 by celebrating SZA's return to the top of the charts [with her *SOS Deluxe: LANA*], certainly a noted highlight." The release pushed the album back to No. 1 on the Billboard 200 after 22 months, the largest gap for any album since the chart began publishing on a regular weekly basis in March 1956.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Take breaks," Hope says, "and every day, talk to people you love about things that do not involve you or work."

Juliette Jones
COO
Alamo Records

Alamo successfully launched Rod Wave's *Last Lap*, which debuted at No. 2 on the Billboard 200 in October. BossMan Dlow was also a highlight for the company in 2024, with the rising rapper enjoying his first entries on the Hot 100 with "Get in With Me" and "Mr. Pot Scraper" off the RIAA gold-certified *Mr Beat the Road* mixtape. And through the partnership between Alamo division Santa Anna Records with OVO Sound, PartyNextDoor and Drake debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 in February with *$ome $exy $ongs 4 U*. "I'm extremely encouraged by the progress of our roster of developing artists including Chuckyy, YFG Fatso and wolfacejoeyy," Jones says, "as well as Santa Anna's vast network of label and artist partners."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "With power dynamics in this country shifting in unprecedented and frankly alarming ways, it's important not to let anyone dictate the ceiling of your capability. Be your own No. 1 fan and advocate."

The Carousel of Hope

Hit-making songwriter **DIANE WARREN** received an Academy Award nomination for best original song for "The Journey," sung by H.E.R. in *The Six Triple Eight.*

JESSE GRANT FOR VARIETY

Celine Joshua
EXECUTIVE VP OF GLOBAL MARKETING
JoJamie Hahr
EXECUTIVE VP OF RECORDED MUSIC FOR NASHVILLE
Katie Kerkhover
SENIOR VP OF A&R FOR FRONTLINE RECORDINGS
Elise Stawarz
VP OF DIGITAL MARKETING FOR U.S. AND GLOBAL CATALOG
BMG

BMG's recording and publishing rosters boast a diverse group of modern hit-makers (Bruno Mars, Halsey, Jelly Roll) and industry legends (Elvis Costello, Keith Richards, Diane Warren), and during the first half of 2024, it reported an 11% gain in revenue of $491.7 million, with digital jumping 20%. Joshua cites partnerships with AI companies OpenAI, Eleven Labs and TUM GenAI as driving forces in BMG's recent achievements. "These collaborations drive innovation in discovery, engagement and creative expression," Joshua says. "Hard work and being strategic is essential, but innovation is what makes real progress."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Embrace creativity, take a risk and carve your own path forward," Joshua says.

Jessica Keeley-Carter
CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER, WARNER RECORDED MUSIC
Tracie Parry
SENIOR VP/HEAD OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS FOR GLOBAL CATALOG
Warner Music Group

"Our global network continued to work in lockstep with our labels and local teams, delivering standout campaigns that resonated with fans — and catapulted a diverse group of artists, across genres and geographies, to the top of the charts," Keeley-Carter says. In 2024, Warner saw Rosé & Bruno Mars' "APT." hit No. 1 on the Billboard Global 200, while Benson Boone's "Beautiful Things" was No. 1 on the year-end 2024 Global 200 and Linkin Park's comeback album, *From Zero*, "landed the group the top album in 13 countries," Keeley-Carter says. Not only that: Charli xcx's "brilliant *brat* campaign defined the summer," she adds. "It was special for our team to help bring her unique vision to life and see the project chart in 15 countries, including in the U.K., where it held the top spot."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Get a dog," Keeley-Carter says.

Nicole Kim
VP OF A&R
Victoria White Mason
VP OF MARKETING
Natalie Landsberg
DIGITAL MARKETING DIRECTOR
Columbia Records

Columbia's roster of established superstars had another huge year in 2024, with Beyoncé and Tyler, The Creator releasing chart-topping and critically acclaimed new albums and legacy artist Bob Dylan getting a massive catalog boost following the December release of biopic *A Complete Unknown*. But Landsberg says she's particularly heartened by the recent development of two still-growing artists on the label, as she has helped Addison Rae "transition from a social media sensation to a groundbreaking artist with a lasting presence in pop music" and worked with Megan Moroney as she "connects with audiences on such a personal level."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Taking time away from work is just as important as the time spent dedicated to your career in the music industry," Landsberg says. "Cultivating hobbies that are both fulfilling and restorative allows you to recharge so that you can return to work with renewed energy and creativity."

Cat Kreidich
PRESIDENT
ADA

"Our partnerships with industry leaders like Three Six Zero and artists such as BANKS, Kesha and Flume are driving remarkable success globally," Kreidich says of ADA's recent wins. "We've seen breakthrough achievements across markets — from Ayliva [one of Germany's top domestic streaming artists] to Sonny Fodera landing the bestselling independent single in the United Kingdom, to Angelina Mango's triumph at Sanremo in Italy, to Matuê's streaming dominance in Brazil and TitoM making history with the United Kingdom's first [pure] amapiano chart entry." Another major development: Corey Sheridan recently joined ADA's executive team to strengthen its commercial leadership.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Mean what you say and do what you promise — it's rare and people notice. Success isn't about fitting into someone else's template or chasing every trend relentlessly. It's about staying true to your word, showing up consistently for others and creating impact through authentic relationships."

Cris Lacy
CO-CHAIR/CO-PRESIDENT
Victoria Mason
SENIOR VP OF RADIO AND COMMERCIAL PARTNERSHIPS
Kristen Williams
SENIOR VP OF MARKETING AND ANALYTICS
Warner Music Nashville

Over the past year, WMN has helped the artists on its roster reach new career milestones — whether they are Country Music Hall of Famers or acts in the process of becoming modern stars. The team worked with Randy Travis, who lost his voice in 2013 to aphasia, to release "Where That Came From," harnessing AI to create the song's final vocal track. The song became his first to land on the Country Airplay chart in over 15 years. Meanwhile, Cody Johnson confirmed his star status, with his *Leather* winning the Country Music Association (CMA) Award for album of the year while also notching the No. 1 Country Airplay hit "The Painter." Lacy says "that 2025 will bring even more where that came from."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Johnny Cash said it best — 'Track some mud on the carpet,' " Lacy says.

Annie Lee
COO
Gretchen Anderson
SENIOR VP OF PRODUCTION
Jenny Swiatowy
SENIOR VP/HEAD OF CREATIVE SYNC LICENSING
Interscope Capitol Labels Group

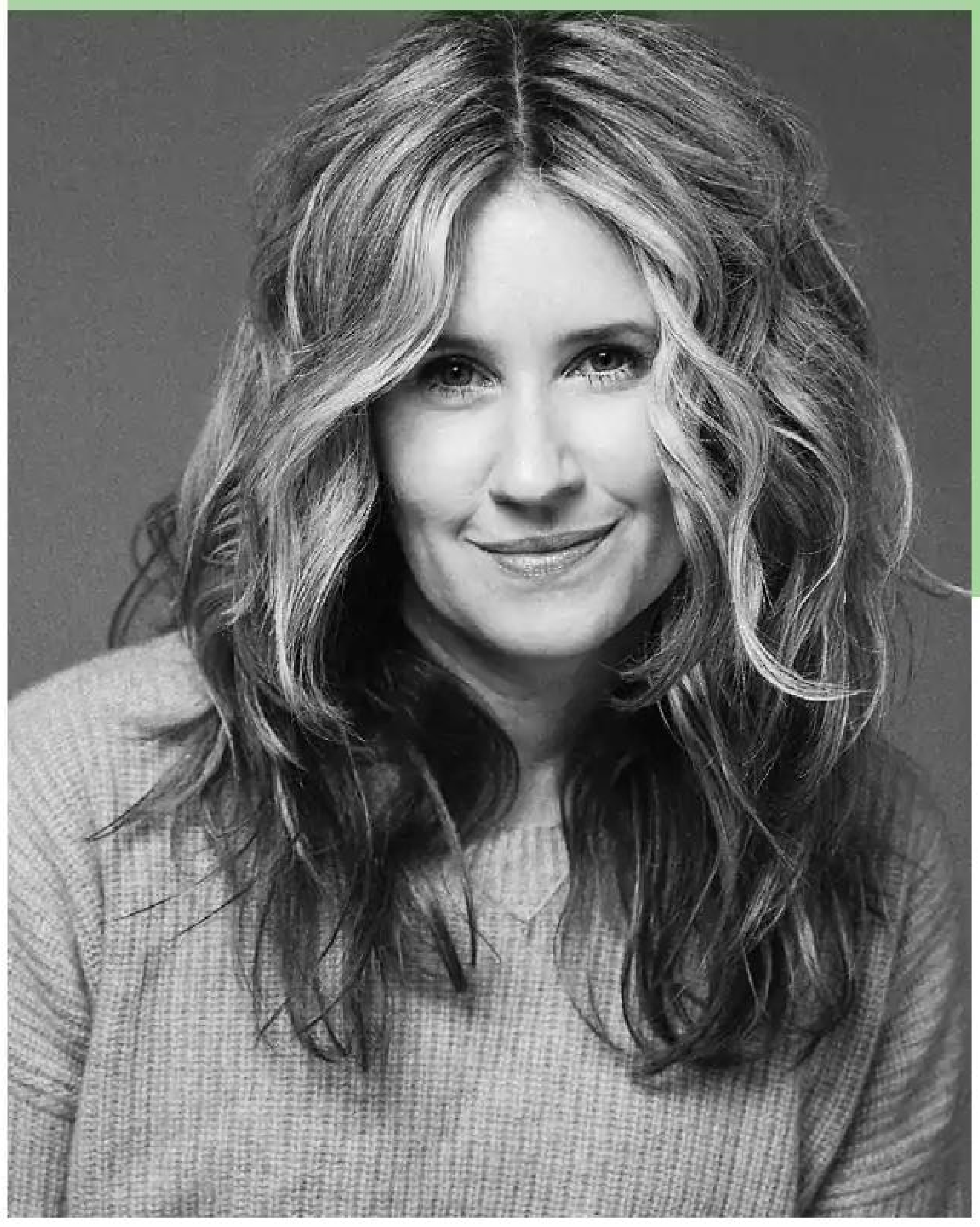
The Universal Music Group restructuring in March 2024 that split the company into two anchoring organizations, REPUBLIC Collective and Interscope Capitol, was a "tremendous effort to execute and a huge adjustment for the teams," Lee says, adding, "We are still adjusting. I cannot begin to explain how proud I am of the teams for working through it while still delivering and doing an amazing job" for artists like Gracie Abrams, GloRilla, Lil Baby and Doechii, as well as Billie Eilish, whose "Birds of a Feather" was the No. 3 most streamed song worldwide with 2.3 billion on-demand audio streams, and Kendrick Lamar, whose "Not Like Us" was the most streamed U.S. song combining audio and video streams (1 billion). Lee says, "We all really came together to support these incredible artists and their teams."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Tackle one thing at a time," Lee says.

Milana Lewis
CO-FOUNDER/CEO
Kristin Graziani
PRESIDENT
Stem

Graziani applauds Mk.gee's critically acclaimed debut album, *Two Star & the Dream Police*, which led to a November *Saturday Night Live* performance amid his world tour. Drew Baldridge's "She's Somebody's Daughter (Reimagined)" peaked at No. 3 on Country Airplay, making it the highest-charting self-released single in the list's 35-year history (surpassing Aaron Watson's "Outta Style," which reached No. 10 in 2017). Stem also expanded its "reach and expertise within new genres like comedy and contemporary Christian via major partnerships with 800lb Gorilla Media and Bethel Music," Graziani says. Bethel Music's live version of "Holy Forever" (featuring Jenn Johnson and CeCe Winans) earned a 2025 Grammy nomination for best contemporary Christian music performance/song, while Nikki Glaser's *Someday You'll Die*, produced by 800lb, was nominated for best comedy album.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "The biggest unlock for me professionally and personally was learning how and when to say no [and] limit what is considered a priority," Graziani says.



ROBBY KLEIN

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT

> “Johnny Cash said it best — ‘Track some mud on the carpet.’ ”
>
> —**Cris Lacy**, co-chair/co-president, Warner Music Nashville

Taylor Lindsey
CHAIR/CEO
Margaret Tomlin
VP OF A&R
Liz Cost
VP OF INTERNATIONAL MARKETING AND ARTIST DEVELOPMENT
Sony Music Nashville

Over the past year, SMN (working with Columbia) has boosted country singer-songwriter Megan Moroney’s rapidly rising career. Building on the success of songs including “Tennessee Orange” and “No Caller ID,” Moroney won the new artist of the year honor at the CMA Awards and was new female artist of the year at the 2024 Academy of Country Music (ACM) Awards. Moroney, whom Lindsey calls “one of Nashville’s brightest new stars,” opened stadium shows for Kenny Chesney and had a top three debut with *Am I Okay?* on Top Country Albums. “We are so proud to be part of this winning team,” Lindsey says.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT “As women continue to thrive in the workforce, there is still this immense pressure to do it all,” Lindsey says. “My advice is you don’t have to do it all. But if you want to, you don’t have to do it alone.”

Molly McLachlan
CO-PRESIDENT
10K Projects

Last year, 10K Projects saw Ice Spice deliver her debut album, *Y2K!*, after stringing together a flurry of Hot 100 hits in 2023. Spice took her talents on the road with her headlining *Y2K!* world tour and at festivals including Coachella. 10K Projects also watched Artemas bloom into a full-fledged pop star when his hit “i like the way u kiss me” cracked 1 billion streams and earned a BRIT Awards nomination for song of the year. “It has also been exciting to become part of the Atlantic Music Group,” says McLachlan, who joined Atlantic alongside co-president Nicholas Ziangas. “We’re already feeling the support of the organization on our releases.”

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS “Have clear boundaries when it comes to work. Music can easily become your whole life if you allow it to. Try to switch off when you can.”

Michele Nadelman
CFO
Dionnee Harper
EXECUTIVE VP OF MARKETING AND ARTIST DEVELOPMENT
Karen Kwak
EXECUTIVE VP/HEAD OF A&R
Dalia Ganz
SENIOR VP OF DIGITAL MARKETING
Warner Records

“I’ve been a fan of Linkin Park for over 20 years, so working on the campaign to relaunch the band was a privilege and career highlight,” Ganz says of the group’s return with new singer Emily Armstrong. “I’m still thrilled that nothing leaked and fans got to experience the artfully crafted rollout.” The release of *From Zero*, the band’s first album without late singer Chester Bennington, resulted in a No. 2 debut on the Billboard 200. The act then made chart history, as tracks from the album claimed the entire top 10 on the Hot Hard Rock Songs chart dated Nov. 30. Linkin Park subsequently announced a world tour.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS “Carbs and cuteness,” Ganz says. “All I need is a chocolate chip cookie and a hug from my son Trent and I can solve any crisis.”

Natina Nimene
EXECUTIVE VP OF URBAN PROMOTION AND ARTIST RELATIONS
Zoe Briggs
VP OF GLOBAL MARKETING STRATEGY
Brittney Ramsdell
SENIOR VP OF CREATIVE SYNC
REPUBLIC Collective

Working with superstars like Republic Records’ The Weeknd and Nicki Minaj, as well as rising talents including Def Jam’s Muni Long and Coco Jones, are among the highlights for the REPUBLIC Collective team over the past year, Nimene says. Plus, focusing on breaking new artists such as Republic Records’ FLO and Ayra Starr and Def Jam’s GELO is keeping the team busy in 2025. “[GELO already has] the hottest hip-hop record of 2025,” she says. “The most exciting thing about his project is that he has a ton of music on deck that’s just as good as ‘Tweaker.’ We can’t wait to share all of it and introduce him as a generational artist.”

CHARITY I SUPPORT “I support Black Music Action Coalition,” Nimene says. “I’m so inspired by the work they do. They’ve really made an impact when it comes to fighting and changing the structures of systemic racism in the music industry.”

Alejandra Olea
MANAGING DIRECTOR, AMERICAS
Believe
Andreea Gleeson
CEO
TuneCore

In 2024, TuneCore took center stage in the U.S. expansion plans of corporate parent Believe after the latter company’s acquisition by founder Denis Ladegaillerie and investors. Believe and TuneCore were also thrown into the streaming fraud debate after Universal Music Group named the companies in a copyright infringement action. (The companies have disputed UMG’s claims.) TuneCore’s Accelerator promotional and audience-building tools were used by nearly 450,000 independent artists worldwide to drive 21 billion new streams and get fans to discover them 2.5 billion times, Gleeson says. “Those artists [are] seeing their median royalty earnings increase fivefold,” she says.

CHARITY I SUPPORT “I’m proud to serve as the board chair of Keychange U.S., a nonprofit dedicated to advancing gender equity and inclusion within the music industry,” Gleeson says. “I am also the co-founder of the Music Fights Fraud Alliance, a global task force focused on eradicating streaming fraud.”

Lillia Parsa
PRESIDENT
Jennifer Ashworth
SENIOR VP OF COMMERCIAL MARKETING AND STREAMING
Capitol Music Group
Emily Dashiell
SENIOR VP OF COMMERCIAL PARTNERSHIPS
Capitol Christian Music Group

Thanks in part to her December NPR *Tiny Desk* concert, Doechii took off in February, winning the award for best rap album at the Grammys for her August mixtape, *Alligator Bites Never Heal*, which then reached new chart highs of No. 5 on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums, No. 3 on Top Rap Albums and No. 14 on the Billboard 200. Her 2025 hit “Denial Is a River” placed in the top 10 of Hot Rap Songs, Rap Streaming Songs and Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs. With indie partner Top Dawg Entertainment, the labels “set her up in such a major way for 2025,” says Parsa, a publishing vet who took over Capitol Music Group about a year ago and has been “building our team and ensuring that we’re all focused on the right things.”

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS “Ensuring I get regular exercise,” Parsa says, “and cold plunges help keep me on the beam.”

Survey Reveals Best Places For Women To Work In The Music Industry

The employee study is a groundbreaking initiative of the nonprofit organization Women in Music

LIVE NATION ENTERTAINMENT
SHE IS THE MUSIC
LIVE NATION WOMEN
MOMS IN MUSIC
SUMMER SOIRÉE
LISTEN WITH LIVE NATION WOMEN
WILTERN
CELEBRATE WOMEN EVERY DAY
THE FILLMORE
My Gender Is Not My Genre
HOLLYWOOD PALLADIUM

Employees of Live Nation rated the company as one of the best places for women to work in the music industry, according to a new survey.

LIVE NATION, BMI, ASCAP, Nettwerk Music Group, Soundstripe and the Recording Academy rank among the best places in the music business for women to work, according to a first-of-its-kind survey.

The 40-year-old nonprofit organization Women in Music, in partnership with company reviews platform InHerSight, has unveiled its first edition of WIM Best Places To Work, recognizing top companies in several areas, based on industrywide initial survey data. Women in Music, established in 1985, describes its mission as serving "to advance the awareness, equality, diversity, heritage, opportunities and cultural aspects of women in the musical arts through education, support, empowerment and recognition."

"The music industry has long been a cultural force for change, and now more than ever, we have to take the lead in prioritizing diversity in leadership as much as the diversity of the music we represent," Women in Music president Nicole Barsalona says.

"Research shows that gender-diverse leadership drives revenue, innovation and talent retention — it's not just good practice, it's critical to our success as an industry," Barsalona says. "Future surveys will include increased diversity metrics to add even more depth to the data, but this is an exciting start."

The WIM Best Places To Work initiative honors music companies that demonstrate excellence in fostering inclusive workplace culture and ensuring satisfaction across metrics that matter to women, such as salary, leadership opportunities, remote work options and parental leave.

Women in Music notes that the survey is ongoing and accessible through its website to ensure that it's continually updated to reflect the latest industry standards in workplace excellence.

"Our philosophy has always been that data is central to building better workplaces," InHerSight co-founder and CEO Ursula Mead says. "So when organizations like Women in Music come to us recognizing the power of data, we're thrilled to realize their initiative."

The survey cites research from consulting firm McKinsey that states that companies with strong female representation at the top outperform competitors by nearly 50% in profitability and share performance.

In addition to those previously named, smaller companies and organizations (of two to 51 employees) that ranked high on the survey include the Music Business Association, The Syndicate, Blackstar Agency, the American Association of Independent Music and the Mechanical Licensing Collective.

"I'm thrilled to know that the Music Business Association scored so well in the WIM Best Places To Work survey," MBA president Portia Sabin says. "Diversity is very important for us in all aspects of what we do, and we've worked to diversify our board, our events and our staff. One thing we strive for is to have diversity at all levels of the company, providing a mentorship aspect for younger people who may join us. It's very true that our diversity makes us stronger as a team and makes this a great place to work."

The survey collected data on 17 research-backed metrics. The results singled out the top companies in categories including equal opportunities for women and men, women in leadership, salary satisfaction, flexibility, remote work opportunities, maternity and adoptive leave, employee responsiveness and a sense of belonging.

Live Nation, for example, stood out for its maternity and adoptive leave policies, ability to telecommute, remote work opportunities, flexible work hours and equal opportunities for men and women.

The WIM Best Places To Work initiative has been launched at a challenging time for corporate America, says Monika Tashman, a partner at prominent music industry law firm Loeb & Loeb and an advisory board member at Women in Music.

"With diversity, equity and inclusion programs terminated at the federal level and a vow to police the private sector's DEI initiatives," she says, "it is vital that we publicize, promote and encourage private sector companies that are committed to constructing a workplace culture and benefits package that is unbiased and crafted to allow all employees to thrive." —THOM DUFFY

Women in Music is a 501(c)3 charitable organization, unaffiliated with Billboard*, founded in 1985 to educate, empower and advance women in the music industry. WIM hosts year-round educational and career development programming in chapter markets around the world, with equity-focused initiatives that include WIM Safe(r) Spaces, the WIM Workplace Initiative, the WIM Mentorship Program and the WIM Executive Internship Program. To become a charitable partner or to make a donation, go to womeninmusic.org.*

COURTESY OF LIVE NATION

CONGRATULATIONS

Proudly celebrating all of our trailblazing
Women in Music honorees

billboard
Women
in Music

SONY MUSIC
PUBLISHING

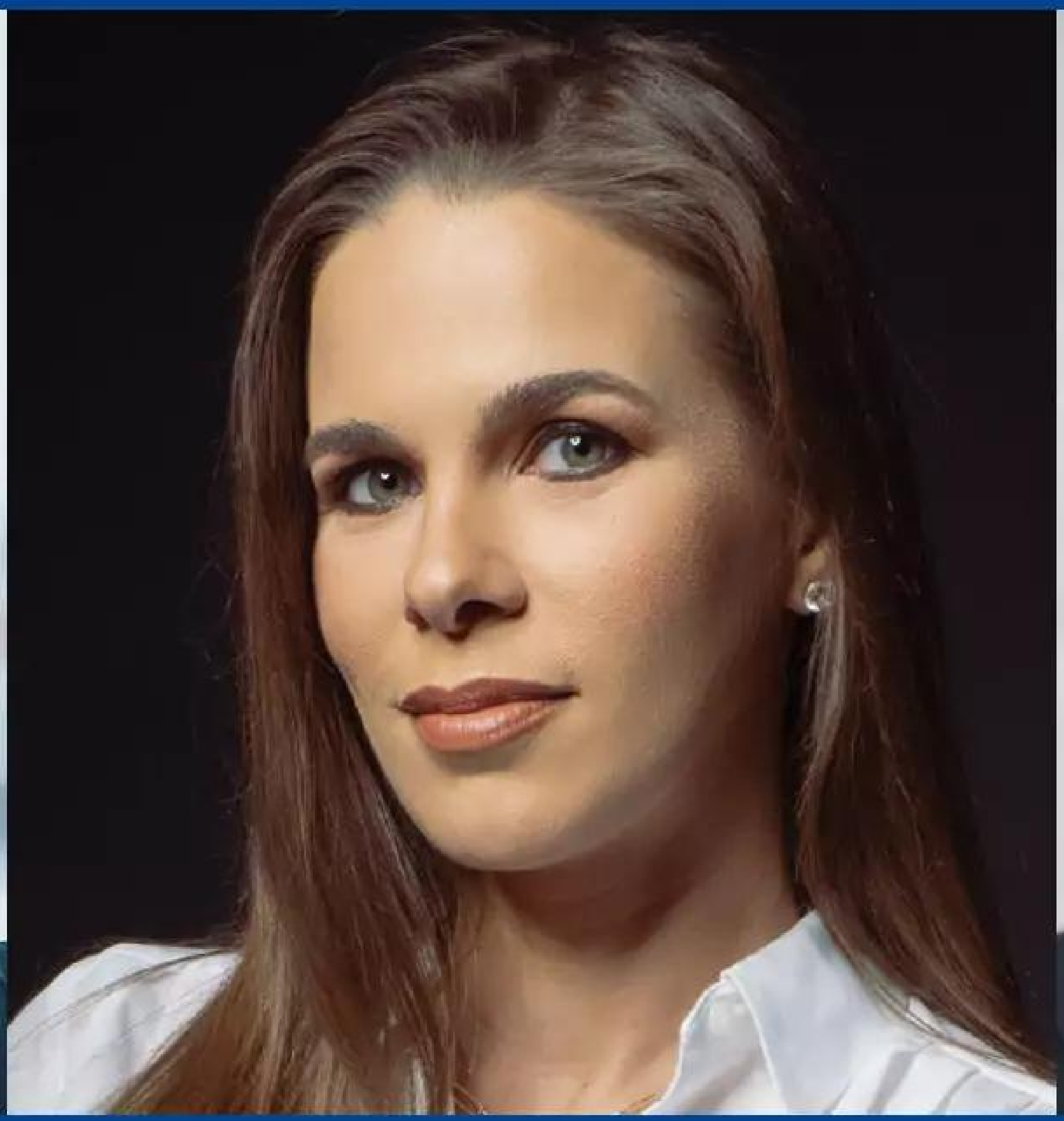
Katie Welle
President, Head of U.S A&R

Scout Easley
Senior Director, Creative A&R

Maggie Martin
Vice President, Creative Marketing
- Film & TV

Meghan Trainor
Hitmaker Award

Anna Weisband
Vice President, Creative A&R
Nashville



Monica Jordan
Director, Creative
US Latin

Veronica Vaccarezza
SVP Business Development
US Latin

Megan Moroney
Rulebreaker Award

Jacqueline Saturn
PRESIDENT OF NORTH AMERICA/EXECUTIVE VP OF GLOBAL ARTIST RELATIONS

Joy Larocca
CFO

Cindy James
GM OF NORTH AMERICA

Virgin Music Group

“In 2024, we completed several acquisitions to continue to expand our offering to independents, including [PIAS] and Outdustry,” Saturn says, “and we grew our roster of partnerships in India, Japan, the U.S. and other territories.” The *Arcane League of Legends: Season 2* soundtrack landed at No. 2 on *Billboard*’s Soundtrack Albums chart; Clairo’s Grammy-nominated album *Charm* went top 10 on the Billboard 200 and, according to Virgin, K-pop group aespa’s *Whiplash — The 5th Mini Album* has already surpassed 250 million streams. “Virgin partners also received 22 Grammy nominations,” Saturn says. “It’s been an incredible year.”

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS “Work stress is challenging,” Saturn says, “so make sure to do things that can block out the noise: Take a walk around the block, book your vacation so you have something to look forward to or schedule a lunch.”

Hyun-joo Seo
VP/EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Starship Entertainment

“Many of our artists boosted their global footprint in 2024,” Seo says. As a producer at Kakao Entertainment-owned Starship Entertainment, Seo says she has worked with artists “to help them break the mold and achieve musical growth.” One example is IVE, a female sextet that launched its first large-scale world tour, Show What I Have, in October 2023, which played for 420,000 fans in 28 cities, according to Starship Entertainment, and ranked at No. 7 on *Billboard*’s year-end 2024 Top K-Pop Tours chart. IVE released the English-language single “All Night” (featuring Saweetie) in January 2024, which was followed by the group’s second EP, *IVE Switch*, in April that reached No. 2 in South Korea and No. 3 in Japan.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS “Concentrate on one’s own goals and development rather than comparing oneself to others.”

Kakul Srivastava
CEO

Splice

Splice, whose licensed samples have shaped the sound of hits like Sabrina Carpenter’s No. 3 Hot 100 smash “Espresso,” provided its users with “the world’s best sounds and new software innovations grounded in ethical AI,” Srivastava says. “As much as AI brings new opportunities, it is a critical time to respect the rights of creators.” She also highlights the work Splice has done with Universal Music Group and electronic instruments maker Roland around “Principles for Music Creation With AI,” a set of guidelines the companies published on how to use AI responsibly and transparently. “In 2025,” she adds, “Splice will continue to change the creative landscape, using responsible AI that respects creators and their creativity.”

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS “I run and I ground my day in that experience.”

Colleen Theis
PRESIDENT/COO

Tricia Arnold
EXECUTIVE VP OF GLOBAL ARTIST/LABEL SERVICES AND SALES

Mary Ashley Johnson
EXECUTIVE VP OF SALES AND ARTIST/LABEL SERVICES FOR U.S. AND CANADA

Laura Tesoriero
SENIOR VP/MANAGING DIRECTOR, LATIN-IBERIA

The Orchard

To Theis, The Orchard maintaining its position as the world’s No. 1 indie distributor is proof that her company still leads the evolution of the artist services sector. “From Peso Pluma to Yoasobi to Kelsea Ballerini, we’re partnering with our clients to bring artists from a wide range of genres and countries to the world stage and helping globalize new genres like phonk, *flamencotón* and *maskandi*,” she says of The Orchard, which Sony Music fully acquired 10 years ago. Since then, The Orchard has grown fivefold thanks to a “diverse, gender-balanced team” that has elevated women to key leadership and senior roles worldwide, including global executives and regional and country leads and positions in DEI, sales and marketing.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS “Dance it off!” Theis says. “Preferably in Ibiza or at a great house party with my crew.”

Charlene Thomas
SENIOR VP OF MARKETING AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

Def Jam Recordings

To celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2024, Def Jam remained “at the forefront of the cultural conversation by launching the first-ever music partnership and branded channel with Tubi,” Thomas says. On the music side, the legendary hip-hop label made major moves in the R&B space with Muni Long’s fourth album, *Revenge*, which featured the Hot 100 top 20 hit “Made for Me” and earned her four Grammy nominations. But Def Jam can’t be discussed without mentioning rap. The label released new music for LL COOL J that made him the first rapper to have a top 10 on the Billboard 200 or Top Rap Albums chart in every decade since the 1980s.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS “Self-care is necessary. Be OK to admit when you are not OK, at minimum to yourself. Use your company resources to fulfill your wellness plan.”

Jackie Winkler
SENIOR VP/HEAD OF A&R

Jenny Gorotiza
VP OF MARKETING

Natasha Kilibarda
VP OF MARKETING AND CREATIVE STRATEGY

Island Records

With massive breakthroughs from culture-defining artists like Sabrina Carpenter and Chappell Roan, Island had an influence over the musical landscape in 2024 that was undeniable. But Winkler points to the success of Island signee Lola Young as an indicator of where the company is headed in 2025 — the British singer-songwriter raked in over 550 million streams of her viral hit “Messy,” nabbed a collaboration on Tyler, The Creator’s critically lauded *Chromakopia* and earned her first Hot 100 hit (No. 14). “We’ve strategically positioned Lola to be one of the most exciting new artists to watch in 2025,” Winkler says. “As a label, we’re thrilled to continue crafting our strategy to support her rapid ascent.”

CHARITY I SUPPORT “City of Hope is a cause I am deeply passionate about,” Winkler says. “Having witnessed my brother’s journey as a cancer survivor, I will never stop advocating for the extraordinary work they do.”

Elsa Yep
COO

Celia Carillo Castillo
EXECUTIVE VP OF MARKETING

Universal Music Latin America and Iberian Peninsula

In November, Colombian singer-songwriter Ela Taubert gave Universal Music Latino its second consecutive win in the best new artist category at the Latin Grammys (labelmate Joaquina won in 2023). “This achievement highlights the label’s role in promoting emerging Latin talent on the global stage,” Yep says. On the touring front, Colombian hit-maker Feid embarked on his first stadium tour across Spain and Latin America following a successful arena run in the United States. Meanwhile, Latin pop band Morat sold over 900,000 tickets in 14 countries during its stadium tour, according to Universal Music, and Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee’s iconic “Despacito,” including its remix featuring Justin Bieber, made Latin music history by being certified diamond for 10 million U.S. streams and sales.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS “Yoga and go to the beach,” Yep says.

CAT WENNEKAMP

CHARITY I SUPPORT

> “City of Hope is a cause I am deeply passionate about. Having witnessed my brother’s journey as a cancer survivor, I will never stop advocating for the extraordinary work they do.”
>
> —**Jackie Winkler**, senior vp/head of A&R, Island Records

Multisector

Aneliz Aguilar
CO-OWNER/MANAGING MEMBER
Machin Records

Indie label Machin Records achieved "extraordinary" success in the past year, Aguilar says, with four Latin Grammy nominations including album of the year for Ángela Aguilar's *Bolero*. On the charts, Leonardo Aguilar and Pepe Aguilar's "Bandido de Amores" — originally recorded over 30 years ago by his grandfather Antonio Aguilar and Joan Sebastian — topped *Billboard*'s Regional Mexican Airplay chart in July and marked Leonardo's second No. 1 on the list. Plus, 20-year-old accordionist Irany joined Karol G's band for her *Mañana Será Bonito* world tour following her celebrated *Tiny Desk* concert performance. "These milestones," Aguilar says, "reflect our commitment to nurturing and showcasing incredible talent."

CHARITY I SUPPORT "I support Asociación Gilberto, an organization dedicated to helping families in need after natural disasters in Mexico. Giving back to the community and supporting those facing hardships is deeply important to me."

Jayne Andrew
CO-FOUNDER/HEAD OF CREATIVE SERVICES
COLTURE

COLTURE, the music company co-founded in 2018 by Andrew and Ty Baisden (manager of Brent Faiyaz), expanded in 2024 with the launch of its full-service creative agency, COLTURE Creative. Andrew leads the venture as its creative director and says she already "designed tour stages for Sexyy Red and the Clipse and served as creative director and tour stage designer for Brent Faiyaz's world tour." Looking to grow beyond music, COLTURE is one of the producers of the Broadway play *Othello* starring Denzel Washington. However, working with today's stars isn't enough for Andrew. The company's foundation, COLTURE Cares, works to empower "the next generation of creative leaders through education, mentorship and equity," she says.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Balance and a change of perspective. Your career is not your identity. Once you establish that, you will personalize less and solve problems without juggling your emotions."

Ashley Calhoun
PRESIDENT

Annie Aberle
SENIOR VP/HEAD OF CREATIVE
PULSE Music Group

Sara Ahmed
VP OF MARKETING
PULSE Records

"One of the biggest achievements from the team at PULSE Music Group this year was the first PULSE Records signing, Tommy Richman, delivering a huge hit out of the gate with 'Million Dollar Baby,' " says Calhoun, who signed the rising star "with our beloved publishing client Brent Faiyaz." The song also broke the record for the longest-running No. 1 on the TikTok Billboard Top 50 chart and reached the top of the Billboard Global 200. Richman also won the top R&B male artist and top R&B song honors for "Million Dollar Baby" at the 2024 Billboard Music Awards. "The whole team did an excellent job of maximizing a viral moment and turning it into a massive global hit record," Calhoun says, "putting Tommy Richman on the map in a significant way."

CHARITY WE SUPPORT "MusiCares is also doing incredible work to help music industry professionals affected by the recent and devastating fires in L.A.," Calhoun says.

For multiple weeks last fall, SABRINA CARPENTER had three hits in the top 10 of the Hot 100 with "Espresso," "Taste" and "Please Please Please," all from her album *Short n' Sweet,* which reached No. 1 on the Billboard 200.

JOHN SHEARER/GETTY IMAGES

Donna Caseine
EXECUTIVE VP OF GLOBAL/CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Faith Newman
EXECUTIVE VP OF A&R AND CATALOG DEVELOPMENT
Reservoir Media

"It is a privilege to lead Reservoir's global creative team, bringing in new talent and also supporting our active creators," Caseine says. In 2024, Caseine and her team helped capture lightning in a bottle with Reservoir songwriter Steph Jones' co-writing credit on Sabrina Carpenter's "Espresso" — a three-week Billboard Global 200 No. 1 and *Billboard*'s No. 1 global song of the summer. "From memes to brand partnerships, featured synch placements and more, the song was inescapable," Caseine says, "and the entire Reservoir team has been so proud to support Steph's success."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Be patient," Caseine says. "A career in the music industry is a marathon, not a sprint. Focus on consistency, developing relationships, trusting your instincts and keeping a long-term vision in sight to help projects you're excited about come to fruition."

Alisa Coleman
COO/BOARD CHAIR
ABKCO Music & Records
BOARD CHAIR
Mechanical Licensing Collective

ABKCO has helped lead the industry in efforts to compensate songwriters and artists when generative AI software uses their work. In November, alongside Universal Music Group and Concord, ABKCO also filed a suit against Believe and its distribution company, TuneCore, accusing them of "massive ongoing infringements" of their recordings. The companies have disputed the claims. "ABKCO's advocacy in the protection of our writers and artists rights remains unprecedented across the entirety of the music ecosystem," Coleman says.

CHARITY I SUPPORT "Last June, along with the wonderful team at SONA, I helped to create an event called Songs in Stages. It's a powerful fundraiser benefiting the SONA Foundation and [New York University's] Langone Health Blood Cancer Research. As a blood cancer survivor — lymphoma — I can attest firsthand that the research being done in this area is making a significant impact on increasing survivorship."

Elizabeth Collins
CO-PRESIDENT
The Azoff Company

Collins cites 2024 achievements at The Azoff Company, where she and Susan Genco serve as co-presidents. Oak View Group "opened the Co-op [Live] Arena in Manchester [England] and added significantly to our OVG 360 business." Private equity firm Hellman & Friedman bought out Texas Pacific Group's stake in Global Music Rights. Iconic Artists Group partnered with HPS Investment Partners to raise over $1 billion in equity and debt to purchase publishing and master recording catalogs as well as name and likeness rights for such enduring artists as Rod Stewart, David Lee Roth and Bryan Ferry. Giant Music scored chart success with Cash Cobain and FendiDa Rappa.

CHARITY I SUPPORT "FireAid," Collins says of the fundraising initiative that followed the Los Angeles wildfires. "The Pacific Palisades was my home. It was a wonderful community, and I want to help rebuild that community and give aid to everyone that gave me joy for so many years."

Rose Cook
COO

Samantha Saturn
CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER
SESAC Music Group

SESAC Music Group spent 2024 expanding its capabilities and global reach with acquisitions and partnering agreements. "The acquisition of HAAWK strengthened our ability to support independent creators by offering advanced tools for copyright management and monetization of music, film and video assets," Saturn says. "Additionally, SESAC Music Group entered a global rights management agreement with the Korean Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, marking a pivotal step in representing SESAC performing rights repertoire in South Korea and expanding its international platform." She adds, "These efforts demonstrate our dedication to providing innovative solutions and maximizing value for music creators on a global scale."

CHARITY I SUPPORT "I serve on the board of Gilda's Club of Middle Tennessee, an organization that provides free support and resources for cancer patients and their families," Saturn says. "I lost both of my parents to cancer, and it was an invaluable resource for me and my sisters at that impossible time."

Ainsley Daigle
VP
Firebird Artist Management

In the last year, investment company Firebird Music Holdings partnered with management companies JET and Hills, helping "to expand a truly special community in the live space" with festival All Things Go, according to Daigle. She also highlights the company's "game-changing partnership" with Yungblud — which combines the British artist's various revenue streams into a single enterprise known as YB Inc. — as a sign of the company's forward-thinking approach. "The artists, managers and broader teams in our extended Firebird family are moving the industry forward," Daigle says, "and we couldn't be more excited to do that with them."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Build your community and consistently give back to it without expectation. Happiness and success are paths and not destinations — and nothing matters more on those paths than real, meaningful relationships."

Tina Davis
PRESIDENT
Alexandra Moore
CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICER
Heather Vassar
SENIOR VP OF OPERATIONS, NASHVILLE
EMPIRE

EMPIRE's year was defined by the breakout success of Shaboozey, whose country crossover smash, "A Bar Song (Tipsy)," exploded into the stratosphere, ultimately tying the record for longest-running No. 1 on the Hot 100 at 19 weeks and racking up over 1.5 billion on-demand streams in the United States. Shaboozey's success led to multiple Grammy nominations, including one for best new artist. But that wasn't EMPIRE's only focus. Davis notes that the company "also secured several first-of-their-kind business and investment deals across licensing, sports and consumer product companies, which speaks volumes to our work as a multihyphenate entertainment company."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "No matter how far you've come on your journey, it's always OK to ask for help. This fosters a collaborative environment where everyone can thrive," Davis says. "When you need to step back and unplug, you can trust your community or team to pick up where you left off."

Yvette Davis Gayle
CO-FOUNDER/COO
Africa Creative Agency

"Over the past 12 months, we have accomplished remarkable milestones through the business entities that I have co-founded with my partners," Gayle says. South African rapper Maglera Doe Boy signed to Epic Records and released his latest album, *Maglera Tapes*, at the end of last year. His labelmate and "Water" hit-maker Tyla won a 2024 Grammy for best African music performance. And Africa Creative Agency launched Exodus Records in partnership with The Orchard, which "has allowed us to create unparalleled opportunities for Africa's exceptional talent," she says. "Thankful and grateful for taking Africa to the world and the world to Africa."

CHARITY I SUPPORT "As a charter member of the Southern Africa Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, we support several charities in Southern Africa including ... Marotholi Outreach, a nonprofit organization aimed at addressing the alarmingly high number of malnourished children in vulnerable communities."

Min Hu
CFO/DIRECTOR
Tencent Music Entertainment Group

Few Western music streaming services operate in China, where Tencent Music Entertainment Group (a *Billboard* licensee) has become a behemoth and carries major momentum into 2025. Tencent Music Entertainment's three music streaming services — QQ, Kugou and Kuwo — went from 100 million subscribers at the end of 2023 to 119 million in September, with 10 million of those customers opting for the higher-priced Super VIP tier. "We have made great progress in helping artists and musicians grow, effectively assisting the development of their music careers. As a result, the company has achieved healthy growth in various business indicators," Hu says. "This reflects the success of our dual-engine content-and-platform strategy, which focuses on enhancing quality and improving operational efficiency."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Embrace lifelong learning. With emerging technologies like AI reshaping the industry, staying curious and committed to growth will hone your competitive edge."

Allison Kaye
PRESIDENT
Jennifer McDaniels
PRESIDENT OF MANAGEMENT
HYBE America/SB Projects
Allison Jones
EXECUTIVE VP OF A&R
Big Machine Label Group
Da Hae Lee
LEAD OF GLOBAL INVESTMENT TASK FORCE
HYBE

HYBE's creation of central services for its multinational divisions "has been game-changing, reemphasizing HYBE's foundational strength as a truly global company," Kaye says. The results can be seen in chart positions. The solo debut of BTS' Jin, *Happy*, landed in the top 10 of the Billboard 200, while bandmate Jimin also reached the top 10 and remained on the chart for 26 weeks with *Muse*. Le Sserafim's *Easy* and *Crazy* EPs both reached the Billboard 200 top 10, while ENHYPEN's *Romance: Untold* hit No. 2 on the Billboard 200 and experienced "their best sales week ever — and one of the biggest debut sales weeks of the year," Kaye says. "It's clear these transformational artists will continue to shape the music industry in 2025."

CHARITY I SUPPORT "I've been heavily supporting the Los Angeles Unified School District," Kaye says. "With the wildfires [in our] L.A. community, so many kids have been taken away from their schools and communities."

Deborah Mannis-Gardner
FOUNDER/CEO
DMG Clearances

Beyoncé's Billboard 200-topping *Cowboy Carter* — which took home the album of the year Grammy in February — was a major catalyst for country music's 2024 domination. Throughout the record, Queen Bey covers Dolly Parton and The Beatles and interpolates Patsy Cline, demonstrating the importance of copyright clearances spearheaded by Mannis-Gardner and DMG Clearances. "That record is important," she says. "We'll be feeling its effects for a long time." Mannis-Gardner will also flex those clearance skills at AYO Music Group — which she recently launched with Pär Almqvist — where she can fix the registrations of artists and rights holders and "get them paid."

CHARITY I SUPPORT "I'm on the board at The Orchid Foundation. This organization is to help guide, educate and support young women of color who come from a disadvantaged lifestyle."

Ruth Martinez
CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER
Concord

In her role at Concord, Martinez has focused on the staff impact of the company's major acquisitions and organic growth. The organization has more than doubled in size since 2019 and has expanded globally into new territories. Concord supports over 125,000 artists and songwriters and boasts a growing catalog of 1.3 million songs, compositions, sound recordings, films, plays and musicals, including its recent acquisition of parts of Daddy Yankee's music publishing and recorded-music catalog. "The artists that we represent have powerful teams at Concord advocating for and promoting them," Martinez says, "many doing the important work that often takes place behind the scenes."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Be curious and ask questions. If someone is doing work that piques your interest, don't be afraid to ask how they got there, why they made certain decisions and what made them successful."

South Korea's LE SSERAFIM released a trailer in February for its fifth mini-album, *HOT*, in which the group members appear frozen as works of art in a gallery.

OLI SCARFF/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Justina Omokhua
SENIOR VP
Parkwood Entertainment

Between Beyoncé's Hot 100 chart-topping "Texas Hold 'Em" and her Netflix-assisted *Cowboy Carter* Christmas Day NFL halftime show, 2024 was proof that "there is never a dull day at Parkwood Entertainment," as Omokhua quips. Last year, Beyoncé's eighth solo studio album spent two weeks atop the Billboard 200, launched three Hot 100 top 10 hits and helped usher in a mainstream country music resurgence that centered Black artists like never before. "Football looks a lot more interesting for Christmas because of the genius of Beyoncé and the team that supports her," Omokhua says. "If that wasn't enough, we announced a tour and took home a few Grammys. When you consider the talent of our leader, it makes what we do seem easy."
ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "You have to believe so much in what you want to achieve that you are already preparing to get up even before you fall."

Livia Piomelli
PARTNER/HEAD OF A&R
Maison Arts

After Maison Arts re-signed Suki Waterhouse to a global publishing deal, the boutique publisher helped promote her 2024 album, *Memoir of a Sparklemuffin*, and its single "Supersad" (co-written by Maison Arts clients Chelsea Balan and John Mark Nelson, among others) reached No. 11 on Adult Alternative Airplay. Nelson also played 12-string guitar on Shaboozey's Hot 100-topping smash, "A Bar Song (Tipsy)." Elsewhere, producer MOMBRU worked on Muni Long's Adult R&B Airplay No. 1, "Make Me Forget," while JAB co-produced Danny Ocean's Latin Airplay No. 1 hit, "Amor." "I'm incredibly proud that we were able to celebrate three No. 1 records across three different genres this past year," Piomelli says. "These milestones highlight our commitment to championing diverse artists and sounds."
TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Prioritize wellness — body, mind and community."

Gabi Serafine
VP OF OPERATIONS
Artist Partner Group/Artist Publishing Group

After a year defined by expansion in 2024, in which Artist Partner Group successfully reached 50% overall sales growth and increased its workforce to nearly 50 employees, Serafine says that the company is "focusing closely on artist development and the growth of executive and creative talent." Currently, the company is committed to giving back to those affected by the recent L.A. wildfires. That includes support for over 10 nonprofits, a partnership with MusiCares dedicated to funding relief efforts and a collaboration with their own A Studio to provide free studio time and engineering services to artists looking to assist fire relief efforts.
ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Continue to stay focused, utilize your time by doing what hasn't been done before, be the change you want to see, and make sure you love what you do."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS

> "Breathing and moving. When things get crazy, take a step away and breathe. Take a walk with a colleague or call your mother!"
>
> **—Lori York**, executive vp of TV and film, Roc Nation

AMY SUSSMAN

Hildi Snodgrass
COO
Iconic Artists Group

"2024 was a milestone year for Iconic," Snodgrass says of the legacy-focused division of The Azoff Company (whose co-presidents, Susan Genco and Elizabeth Collins, are also Women in Music honorees). "We secured $1 billion in capital from a new strategic investor, HPS Investment Partners, along with debt financing. We expanded our Iconic roster with several additions including Rod Stewart, Brian Ferry and David Lee Roth. And we continued to grow our artists' legacies, consumption and audiences through initiatives like the Beach Boys documentary, the Wu-Tang Clan and Nike Dunk collab and a multifaceted Dean Martin holiday campaign" for the singer who has surpassed 3 billion streams in the United States alone.
ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Strive to find the balance between working hard, caring for yourself and nurturing relationships with your family and friends."

Emily Stephenson
PRESIDENT, DOWNTOWN MUSIC PUBLISHING

Molly Neuman
PRESIDENT, CD BABY
Downtown Music Holdings

Downtown Music Publishing had a stellar year in 2024. The division, which includes Songtrust and Sheer, generated $200 million, a 40% increase from 2023, and more revenue than before Downtown sold its publishing catalog. "We've also partnered with exceptional global talent, from Grammy-winning singer-songwriter Colbie Caillat to [five-time Latin platinum-certified] Peso Pluma," Stephenson says. The next six months will be especially interesting as parent company Downtown Music Holdings becomes part of Virgin Music Group, which is expected to happen in the second half of 2025. Universal Music Group has said the companies will operate independently as the deal awaits regulatory approval.
TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Don't let work stress follow you home," Stephenson says. "At work, focus on being dependable. At home, prioritize being present."

Lindsay Unwin
CEO

Gabriella Mosci
HEAD OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION
SALXCO

Melissa Mahood
GM
XO Records

Last year, The Weeknd became the artist with the most songs to exceed 1 billion Spotify streams. Under the leadership of new CEO Unwin, SALXCO "partnered with the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services and various foster care agencies to provide essential resources and create opportunities for kids in the child welfare system," Mosci says. "A key milestone of this initiative was inspiring leading entertainment companies, including Live Nation, to expand their benefits to include foster parents. We continue to engage even more organizations to join us in this important effort."
ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Take the time to meet new people, nurture meaningful relationships and invest in others," Unwin says. "As your career progresses, your skills will always matter, but the relationships you build can have an even greater impact."

Lori York
EXECUTIVE VP OF TV AND FILM
Roc Nation

This year, York executive-produced the Amazon Prime documentary *Megan Thee Stallion: In Her Own Words*, which became the eighth-biggest music doc of 2024 with 146.3 million minutes watched despite being released as recently as Halloween. The film went on to earn a nomination for outstanding directing in a documentary for Nneka Onuorah at the NAACP Image Awards. York also helped launch the series *Fat Joe Talks* on Starz and J Balvin's *A Great Day* on Peacock and Telemundo, while also closing a scripted series deal with Amazon Prime for *The Greatest*, "the first-ever authorized series about the life of Muhammad Ali," she says, in partnership with Lonnie Ali and Michael B. Jordan.
TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Breathing and moving. When things get crazy, take a step away and breathe. Take a walk with a colleague or call your mother!"

UMG's Global Impact Team photographed Dec. 10, 2024, in New York. Standing, from left: Ruzzo, Jones, Siegler and Vavasseur. Seated, from left: Demessie, Mazo and Ritchie.

Making An Impact

Meet the women of Universal Music Group's new task force focused on positive change

PHOTOGRAPHED BY AMY LOMBARD

MUSICIANS HAVE OFTEN EXPRESSED a desire to make a difference in the world, through both their art and their actions. Now, the world's biggest music company has assembled a powerful squad of corporate ninjas to help its artists get the job done.

In June 2024, Universal Music Group chairman/CEO Lucian Grainge announced the creation of the UMG Global Impact Team to "enact and amplify the company's vision for positive change through community engagement, environmental sustainability, events and special projects," the company stated.

Music industry veteran Susan Mazo — who has been with UMG since 2014, is chief impact officer/executive vp and serves as the founding chair of UMG's All Together Now Foundation and is a co-creator of the Amplifier Award, which recognizes artists committed to positive change — assembled the new team of specialized change agents.

The members of the Global Impact Team, who happen to be all women, include Mazo; UMG senior vp/head of sustainability Dylan Siegler; Kristin Jones and Arielle Vavasseur, co-founders of Inside Projects, a strategy and marketing agency that specializes in social impact; UMG senior vp/executive director of the Task Force for Meaningful Change Menna Demessie; UMG vp of global impact Markie Ruzzo; and UMG senior director of global impact and communications Sharlotte Ritchie.

"The strategy came from the highest levels of the company," Mazo says, "working closely with Lucian Grainge and Will Tanous," UMG's executive vp/chief administrative officer and a member of the company's executive management board. Mazo says they sought to form a team who "could help create change and awareness through the power of their networks."

That team's work led to the announcement last September of UMG's 2024 Use Your Voice campaign, which built upon a similar initiative four years earlier and sought to increase voter awareness and participation in the November general election. UMG partnered with leading voter resource organizations including HeadCount, the NAACP, the National Council of Negro Women, When We All Vote and the Voto Latino Foundation.

Mazo notes that HeadCount has reported that Sabrina Carpenter got more voters engaged in last year's election than any other artist the organization works with. HeadCount says Carpenter inspired 35,814 voter registrations and got another 263,087 voters to take other actions outside of registration, such as checking their polling location. The team also launched UMG sound practices for events, a guide for integrating sustainability into UMG initiatives.

In January, as wildfires devastated Los Angeles, the Global Impact Team supported UMG's overall response. UMG partnered with groups and organizations including Support + Feed, Dodgers Foundation, World Central Kitchen and Bruce's Catering to serve first responders and families in need. UMG merchandising company Bravado donated clothing to affected UMG employees and the fire departments in Pasadena and Santa Monica. The company canceled all of its Grammy weekend activities, donating and repurposing all resources including hotel rooms, catering, trucking and vendor resources to relief efforts. In addition, UMG's All Together Now U.S. employee matching program had record donations following the announcement of a 150% super match for fire relief organizations. UMG's efforts regarding wildfire relief are ongoing.

Most recently, the Global Impact Team helped UMG expand its four-year partnership with the nonprofit Music Health Alliance to launch the Music Industry Mental Health Fund. The initiative, announced in February, will provide comprehensive, high-quality outpatient mental health resources for qualified members and workers of the music industry. Mazo calls the expanded partnership "the most natural way to ensure continuous and effective mental health support for anyone working in our industry."

Are the issues that the Global Impact Team addresses "of particular concern to the current generation of UMG artists? Absolutely," Mazo says. "And we're really taking the lead from what our artists are interested in and what our artists are talking to us about." —T.D.

Management

Ruby Anton

DAY-TO-DAY MANAGER

State of the Art

For Anton, watching the 2024 MTV Video Music Awards performance by her former client Chappell Roan was "one of the most rewarding moments I've been lucky enough to be a part of." And while it was just one in a string of successes for Roan last year — including the top five Hot 100 hit "Good Luck, Babe!" — Anton is particularly proud of the team effort involved. "A creative like that takes a village: flaming crossbows, pyro, 12 dancing knights. It was a testament to being able to pull anything off if the team's passion and love for the vision is there." Roan parted ways with State of the Art in the latter half of 2024.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Step out of your comfort zone. If I'm ever nervous or doing something I've never done before, I'll count down from five and, doesn't matter what it is, I have to do it."

Renee Brodeur

PARTNER/EXECUTIVE VP

TMWRK Management

This past year, Brodeur worked alongside star client Diplo and his team to launch Diplo's Run Club, featuring a 5K run followed by a concert. With both events wrapping by 1 p.m., Brodeur says they went into it "having no idea how the turnout would be, seeing the format is so different from his usual shows." But the event "far exceeded our expectations, doing over 20,000 people across two markets in 2024," with plans to expand into new markets in the United States and beyond in 2025. "The planning, strategy and execution," Brodeur says, "was a full team effort across all of TMWRK's various departments — creative, marketing, touring, etc. — and a perfect example of where we excel as a full-service management company."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "The most important bit of advice that I always give to younger women is to work together, be collaborative and have each other's backs."

Alison Chang

HEAD OF GLOBAL BUSINESS/ARTIST MANAGER

OddAtelier

"The past year has been transformative for us," Chang says. In December 2023, she helped launch Jennie's independent label, OddAtelier, which Chang says she's "particularly proud of. Our team dedicated an incredible amount of time, care and effort to launching and cultivating the label. It was rewarding to see our initial vision for OA come to life." On March 7, Jennie released her long-awaited debut album, *Ruby*, and, in April, will make her first solo appearance at Coachella. "There is so much that lies ahead for Jennie and OA," Chang says. "We can't wait to unveil all the exciting projects we have in store."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "It's really hard to find an ideal work-life balance, especially in this industry. It's important to set boundaries and practice mindfulness."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS

> "With the knowledge of being in this industry for over 30 years, you do realize that everything does happen for a reason. I try to keep a level head and thank God for some of those unanswered prayers."
>
> —**Juli Griffith**, owner/co-manager, PunchBowl Entertainment

Alex DePersia

ARTIST MANAGER

by the way

Gracie Abrams "had such an incredible year," DePersia says of her management client, whose album *The Secret of Us* debuted at No. 2 on the Billboard 200 after her opening slots on the Taylor Swift tour. "So many memorable moments; lots of firsts to be proud of. But I think watching her take the stage at Radio City [Music Hall in New York] is something that I will never forget," DePersia says of the headlining show. (A live recording will be released in April for Record Store Day.) "She was graceful and powerful and commanding, and it reminded me of how much has happened in the last few years," DePersia adds. "It was also my baby daughter's first-ever show, so that made it extra special."

CHARITY I SUPPORT "I proudly support Planned Parenthood because we must protect people's access to health care, safe abortion and sex education."

Jessica Giraldo Navarro

CEO

Bichota Records

CO-MANAGER

Karol G

For Giraldo Navarro, helping to plan and execute Karol G's record-breaking *Mañana Será Bonito* tour was the most significant achievement of the past year. The trek grossed $313.3 million and sold 2.3 million tickets over 65 shows, and Karol made history as the first Latina artist to headline a global stadium tour. The outing concluded last summer in Madrid, where she again made history as the first artist to sell out four shows at Santiago Bernabéu Stadium. Giraldo Navarro also launched creative and branding company Bichota Agency and propelled the release of Karol's feel-good merengue "Si Antes Te Hubiera Conocido," which became the first song to surpass 26 weeks at No. 1 on *Billboard*'s Latin Airplay chart.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "I encourage young women to trust their intuition and their ability to lead, even in environments where they might feel underestimated."

Juli Griffith

OWNER/CO-MANAGER

PunchBowl Entertainment

Hayley Corbett

PRESIDENT

PunchBowl Management

CO-MANAGER

PunchBowl Entertainment

"One of our artists, Megan Moroney, won both the Country Music Association and the Academy of Country Music honors for new artist of the year and completely sold out her headline tour for 2025," Griffith says. Another PunchBowl artist, Kristian Bush, had a successful comeback with his previous act, the duo Sugarland with Jennifer Nettles, while also producing Moroney's album. "We are also very excited about the new rock artist from Ireland we signed this year, [independent singer-songwriter] Weston Loney," Griffith says.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "With the knowledge of being in this industry for over 30 years," Griffith says, "you do realize that everything does happen for a reason. I try to keep a level head and thank God for some of those unanswered prayers."

Mary Hilliard Harrington
Mandelyn Monchick

ARTIST MANAGERS

Allison Laughter

VP OF MARKETING, DIGITAL AND STREAMING

Sharon Lord

HEAD OF MARKETING AND ARTIST DEVELOPMENT

Red Light Management

Red Light collaborated with Sabrina Carpenter's team as she dominated pop in 2024 and took home two Grammys in February, including best pop vocal album. In the country genre, the Red Light crew notes Lainey Wilson's meteoric rise to A-list singer-songwriter as a highlight of the last year. Her 2024 album, *Whirlwind*, landed in the top 10 of Top Country Albums (No. 3) and the Billboard 200 (No. 8) and launched a nearly 50-date tour in early March. "From *Yellowstone* to a top-streaming female in the format to sold-out shows, brand deals and ACM entertainer of the year, she has been everywhere," Laughter says.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "I don't drink," Laughter says, "so I'd say, 'Eat my feelings and make snarky jokes.' "

JASON KRUPEK

Congratulations Women in Music honoree **Ruth Martinez**

Your leadership and commitment to building a vibrant, dynamic culture have left a lasting impact on Concord and the industry

concord

Rachelle Jean-Louis

CEO

Tell Your Friends

Jean-Louis, who last year was named *Billboard*'s R&B/Hip-Hop Executive of the Year, spent 2024 celebrating big wins with her family by her side. "One of the most important achievements is being able to fly my mother to Los Angeles for Grammy week, then to New York to see me be honored as Executive of the Year," she says. Jean-Louis earned a slew of honors for her work with newly minted three-time Grammy winner Victoria Monét, who made her first appearances at Coachella, Lollapalooza, Essence Fest and the BET Awards main stage last year. Jean-Louis also oversaw the growth of R&B star Saint Harison, who pulled in nearly 42 million streams in 2024 as a new artist.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Make time for your loved ones. Engage with your community — volunteer and give back."

Aleen Keshishian

FOUNDER/CEO

Lighthouse Management + Media

Keshishian played a major role in the success of Olivia Rodrigo's *GUTS* world tour, which sold out arenas on four continents and brought in $184.6 million from over 1.4 million tickets sold (with six remaining dates through July 1 not reported to Billboard Boxscore). A highlight of the outing for Keshishian? "A show for charity at the world's largest indoor arena in the Philippines," she says. With support from American Express, Rodrigo — who is half Filipino — kept tickets at an accessible $25 top price, with proceeds donated within the country. "I'm also excited for [client] Selena Gomez to be releasing new music after focusing on acting projects and her Rare Beauty [brand] for the last few years." Her new album, *I Said I Love You First*, is a collaboration with Gomez's fiancé, Benny Blanco.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "I haven't figured that one out yet. And don't say I need more sleep — it's never going to happen!"

Julia Khan

PRESIDENT

C*O*A*L Management

"C*O*A*L stands for 'Collective of Artists and Leaders,' and in just over six months, from the ground up, I have led the charge to build a world-class managerial team with dozens of artists and producers now under representation," says Kahn, who is also a management consultant for Muni Long. "We achieved our goal, which was to assemble independent managers into a true collective with a credo of 'art and humans first.' Our managers lead their individual businesses under their own brand names, but with the support of the greater whole and larger parent company, YMU Group." The collective counts among its achievements releases and brand deals for artists including Ari Lennox, Snow Tha Product, Frex, Tiana Major9 and Yussef Dayes.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Cultivate community. Find your people and establish your tribe. Relationships are everything."

Sali Kharazi
Sarah Montgomery

MANAGERS

Fullstop Management

At Fullstop, Kharazi and Montgomery represent artists across generations. "Bon Jovi marked their 40th anniversary with Jon Bon Jovi named as MusiCares Person of the Year, the release of their critically acclaimed documentary on Hulu and *Forever*, the chart-topping album that reignited the band's global presence," Montgomery says, while Tears for Fears staged a sold-out Las Vegas residency. "This last year, I had the privilege of working with Meghan Trainor to put together her first tour in eight years and release her sixth studio album, *Timeless*," Kharazi says. "I am in absolute awe of her growth, her confidence and her ability to continue forging her own path forward."

CHARITY I SUPPORT "I grew up in Los Angeles and attended Palisades Charter High School," Kharazi says. "The fires this year were nothing short of devastating, and the SoCal Fire Fund is working to provide both immediate and long-term support to not only families affected by the wildfires but also the students and school employees."

Olivia Laster

HEAD OF ARTIST AND LABEL RELATIONS

Sticks Management

Laster oversees project management for Morgan Wallen at Sticks, which launched in 2024, and leads relationships and strategies on his management team with label, PR agency and streaming partners. The 2024 extension of Wallen's One Night at a Time Tour notched 26 additional stadium shows, as well as his first seven-concert European run. Alongside promoter AEG, Wallen announced the Sand in My Boots festival, set to debut in May in Alabama. Last year, he also earned his first solo No. 1 debut on the Hot 100 with "Love Somebody" and a six-week Hot 100 No. 1 with his Post Malone collaboration, "I Had Some Help." In addition, Sticks gathered 140,000 pounds of food to aid Hurricane Helene relief efforts.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Regular exercise, journaling and meditation."

Janelle Lopez Genzink

FOUNDER

Amy Davidson

ARTIST MANAGER

Volara Management

At the start of 2024, Lopez Genzink sat down with the Volara team to discuss its goals for the year. "Looking back on that day in January, I can confidently say that the past [year has] been a dream come true in so many ways," she says. Artists like MARINA and HAIM have joined the management company, and client Sabrina Carpenter is now a pop superstar with a Grammy for best pop vocal album to her name. Although Carpenter's Coachella and *Saturday Night Live* performances and Grammy nods could be counted as her high points, Lopez Genzink says, "I'm the most proud of the team we built and are continuing to grow."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "When things get overwhelming," Lopez Genzink says, "I try to take a step back, focus on the bigger picture and give myself permission to reset."

Liz Norris

PARTNER/HEAD OF MEDIA AND BRAND STRATEGY

Kristina "Red" Tanner

PARTNER/HEAD OF TICKETING, COMMERCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Activist Artists Management

Last year, Dead & Company, the touring group featuring Grateful Dead founding members Bob Weir and Mickey Hart alongside John Mayer, became the third act to perform at Las Vegas' Sphere. The band's sold-out 30-date residency grossed $131.8 million and it just kicked off a 2025 run at the venue that continues through May. As the Grateful Dead marks its 60th anniversary — following plaudits such as Kennedy Center honors and MusiCares Persons of the Year — "through strategic media efforts, we've worked to preserve and amplify their enduring impact in music history," Norris says. Additionally, over 250,000 fans visited The Dead Forever Experience at The Venetian featuring a re-creation of the band's audio system, rare concert footage and immersive art installations, according to Tanner.

CHARITY I SUPPORT "As a member of the advisory board for the Music Sustainability Association," Tanner says, "I'm proud to champion sustainability in the music industry."

In the wake of winning the 2024 best new artist Grammy, VICTORIA MONÉT contributed to Amazon Music's *Save the Music: Inspiring Music's Next Generation* documentary, published her first children's book and hit No. 1 on the Adult R&B Airplay chart with "SOS (Sex on Sight)," her duet with Usher.

PARAS GRIFFIN/GETTY IMAGES

Congratulations

Emily Stephenson | **President, Downtown Music Publishing**
Molly Neuman | **President, CD Baby**

Billboard Women in Music 2025

The Music Industry Lives Here.
downtownmusic.com

Clara Pablo
SENIOR VP OF GLOBAL MARKETING AND ARTIST MANAGEMENT
WK Entertainment

With top talents like Maluma and CNCO under management, Pablo keeps making significant strides in the Latin music industry. She reports a banner year, highlighted by Emilia's rise as Argentina's most streamed artist of 2024 and her ability to sell out 10 dates at Buenos Aires' Movistar Arena in 10 hours, as well as four stadium shows, according to Pablo. Emilia's 2023 album, *.mp3*, also clinched the artist her first Latin Grammy nomination and charted multiple hits. "La_Playlist.mpeg" reached No. 26 on Latin Airplay, and "Jagger" and "La Original" (with TINI) hit No. 5 and No. 1 (for seven weeks), respectively, on the Billboard Argentina Hot 100. (She also graced the cover of *Billboard Español* in February.) "This year has been transformative for her, marking a clear before and after in her career," Pablo says, "and this is only the beginning."

CHARITY I SUPPORT "I'm honored to serve on the board of The Breasties foundation. As a breast cancer survivor and advocate, being involved in this community is deeply personal to me."

Melissa Ruderman
MANAGING PARTNER
Rachel Douglas
PARTNER
Range Music

"Range is so incredibly proud of all of our clients for their accomplishments over the past year," Ruderman says. But one stands out: Shaboozey's "A Bar Song (Tipsy) — co-written and co-produced by fellow Range client Sean Cook — topped the Hot 100 for a record-tying 19 weeks. In December, client Mariah Carey opened the NFL's Christmas Day game with her classic "All I Want for Christmas Is You," while Pentatonix and Saweetie engaged in new ventures, with the former scoring a Netflix special and the latter bringing in brand deals. Plus, Range celebrated the opening of its Nashville division and Range Publishing, as well as new signings including Rita Ora and Noah Cyrus.

CHARITY I SUPPORT "[I] am proud to serve on the board of the Organization for Social Media Safety," Douglas says. "I see the urgent need to provide guidelines for parents and to impose checks and regulations on an industry that wields that kind of power and social influence."

Sophia Sansone
MANAGING PARTNER
Make Wake Artists

Make Wake client Luke Combs played to sold-out stadiums across the country for his 2024 Growin' Up and Gettin' Old Tour. The trek placed at No. 11 on Billboard Boxscore's year-end 2024 Top Tours chart, with 39 shows grossing nearly $174 million and 1.4 million tickets sold. Following that run, Combs played the benefit show Concert for Carolina, which raised nearly $25 million for victims of Hurricane Helene. The October event at Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte, N.C., which also featured appearances from Eric Church, James Taylor and Billy Strings, was "a definite career highlight" for Sansone.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Anything you set your mind to you can achieve. Believe in yourself, always. Work very hard and be kind to yourself along the way. Celebrate the wins and keep raising the bar."

Publishing

Jennifer Knoepfle
EXECUTIVE VP/HEAD OF U.S. A&R
Jane Carter
PRESIDENT OF UNIVERSAL PRODUCTION MUSIC
Alexandra Lioutikoff
PRESIDENT OF LATIN AMERICA AND U.S. LATIN
Marni Condro
SENIOR VP OF FILM AND TV
Joy Murphy
SENIOR VP/HEAD OF FILM AND TV LICENSING AND CLEARANCE
Universal Music Publishing Group

"We've had so many highlights in 2024," Knoepfle says. "But it's been incredible to experience two talented and hardworking songwriters and artists like Gracie Abrams and Sabrina Carpenter explode globally over the past year. They both exemplify the focus and dedication it takes to reach new heights, and their creativity and work ethic are so inspiring." And there's even more to celebrate heading into 2025. In January, UMPG became the first publisher to strike a direct deal with Spotify since the passage of the Music Modernization Act — a deal that sources say improves remuneration for UMPG and its songwriters. "Our U.S. and global creative strategies continue to create opportunities for our songwriters that transcend genres and geographical boundaries," Knoepfle adds.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Don't be afraid to ask for what you want," Knoepfle says. "You may not always get it, but you'll never get it if you don't ask."

RON EISENBERG/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

Carianne Marshall
CO-CHAIR/COO
Claire McAuley
EXECUTIVE VP OF GLOBAL RIGHTS MANAGEMENT
Gabz Landman
Katy Wolaver
SENIOR VPs OF A&R
Warner Chappell Music

In February, Landman watched her management client and Warner Chappell priority Amy Allen earn a songwriter of the year, non-classical Grammy Award. McAuley found new ways to capture missing royalties and additional revenue, while Wolaver proved instrumental in signing deals with Teddy Swims and John Ryan. Marshall says that beyond delivering "such great results for [WCM] songwriters," she's proud the company lives by its values of "curiosity, collaboration and commitment." She adds, "Instead of diving further into the numbers or going into one specific achievement, I want to acknowledge the incredible other women [at WCM] who are being recognized — their exceptional leadership and mentorship has been key to our success."

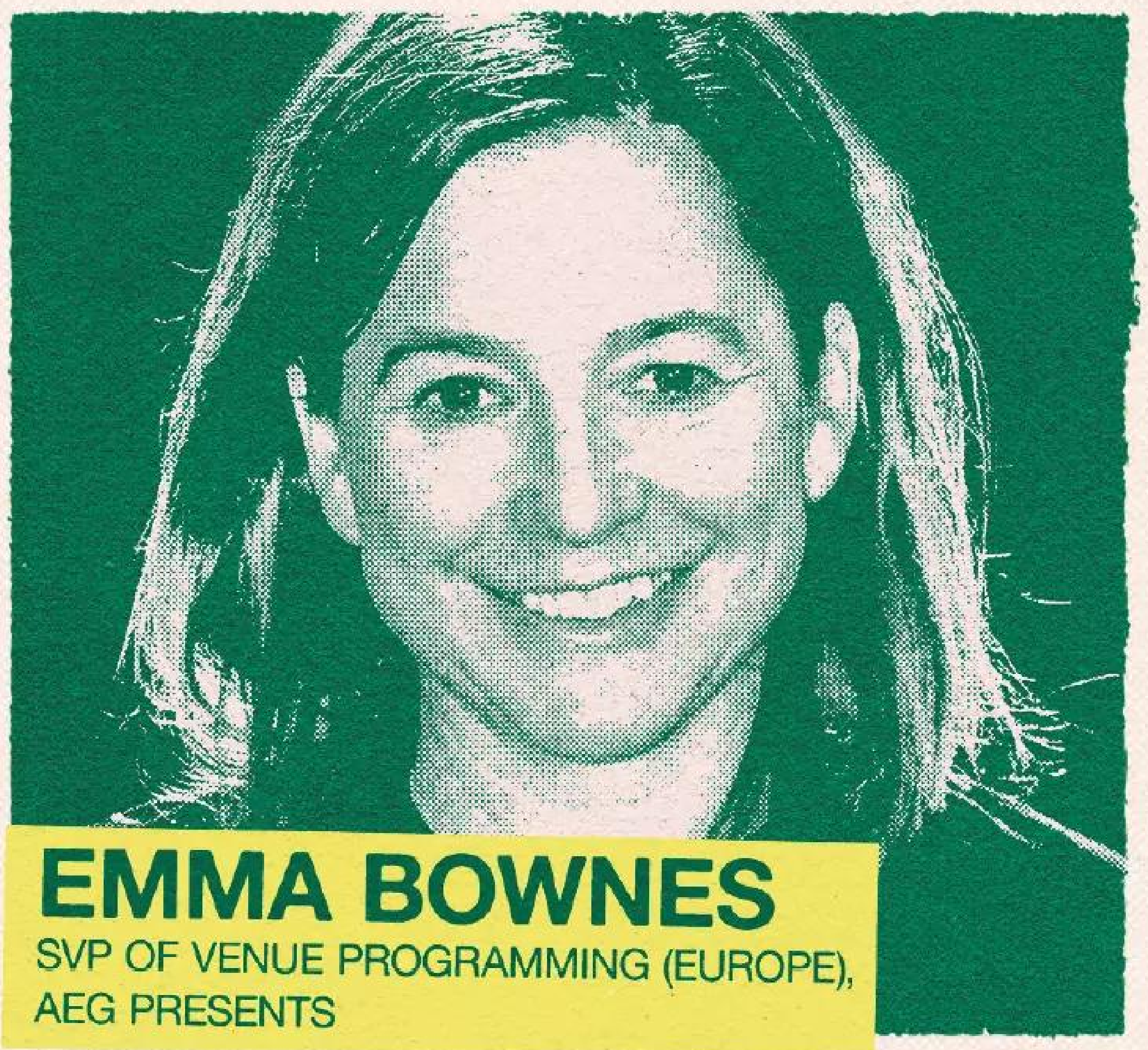
CHARITY I SUPPORT "I am very proud to be on the MusiCares board and support the work they do to uplift the music community during times of need," Marshall says, "especially now as we face the devastating impacts of the L.A. wildfires."

Natalia Nastaskin
CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER
Amy Ortner
CHIEF BUSINESS AFFAIRS OFFICER/GENERAL COUNSEL
Lexi Todd
VP OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS
Primary Wave Music

Biopics on James Brown, Luther Vandross and Allee Willis have enhanced the value of Primary Wave's music catalog holdings. By co-producing jukebox musicals based on the films *Mystic Pizza*, *Girls Just Want To Have Fun* and *Can't Hardly Wait* throughout 2024 featuring massive hits from its library, the company has reminded audiences of the appeal of songs it represents. Primary Wave's acquisition team made partnership deals with the estates of Scott Weiland, Ric Ocasek and Jerry Jeff Walker, as well as living artist-songwriters like Itzhak Perlman and Chuck Mangione. This year will bring documentaries on Olivia Newton-John, the band America, Gerry Goffin, Culture Club and Sun Records.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "What I love to do most is dial up a female friend working in music, set time for a call — or better yet, for drinks — and spend an hour or two uninterrupted just connecting, relating and having some laughs," Nastaskin says. "It's the best stress-buster."

Late Australian superstar OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN will be the subject of a forthcoming docudrama that follows a 2020 deal by Primary Wave Music for the singer's recording and publishing assets.



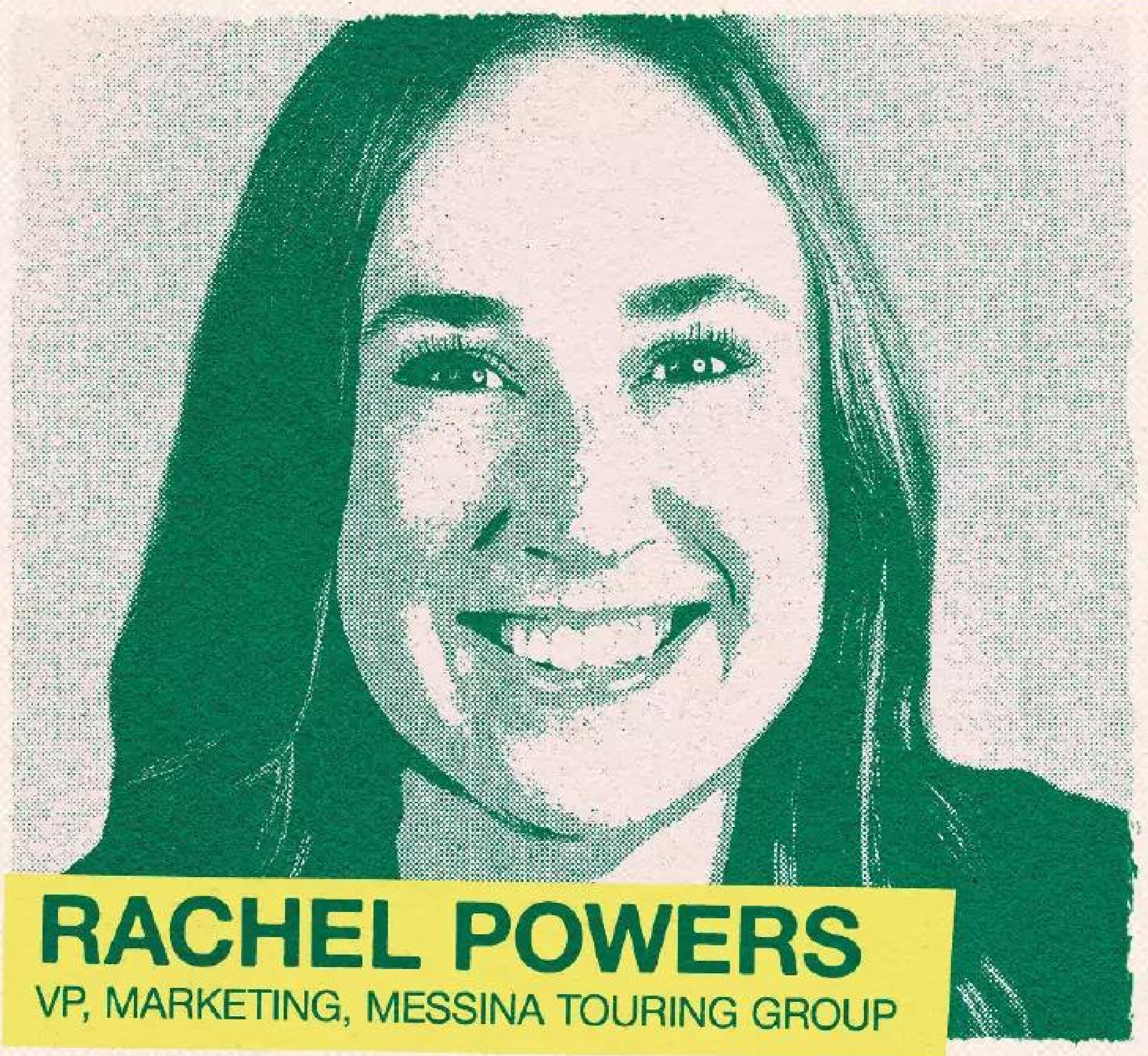
EMMA BOWNES
SVP OF VENUE PROGRAMMING (EUROPE), AEG PRESENTS

LAUREN CAIRE
VP, MARKETING, MESSINA TOURING GROUP

SAMANTHA FERNANDEZ
SVP OF FESTIVAL ACTIVATIONS, AEG PRESENTS

ALICIA KARLIN
VP, GLOBAL TOURING, AEG PRESENTS

KATE MCMAHON
EVP, MESSINA TOURING GROUP



RACHEL POWERS
VP, MARKETING, MESSINA TOURING GROUP

RHEA ROBERTS-JOHNSON
VP, OPERATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, GOLDENVOICE

CONNIE SHAO
VP/GM OF INTERNATIONAL TOURING, AEG PRESENTS

STACY VEE
EVP, GOLDENVOICE

CONGRATULATIONS
2025 BILLBOARD
WOMEN IN MUSIC

AEG
PRESENTS

Mary Megan Peer
CEO
peermusic

Peer had a busy 2024, during which peermusic grew its publishing income worldwide by double digits (16%) and signed breakout "Lose Control" singer Teddy Swims (as well as Grammy winner H.E.R.) to peermusic Neighbouring Rights. The company also added its 32nd country to the peermusic network with the acquisition of Norway's largest indie music publisher, Arctic Rights Management, adding more than 5,000 new compositions for the peermusic portfolio. On the music publishing side, peermusic signed multiple new acts, including Nothing but Thieves, Camilla Dunhill, David Lee Murphy, Aquihayaquihay and Un León Marinero, as well as Marshall Records Publishing. **CHARITY I SUPPORT** "My most recent charitable donation was to the LAFD Foundation. The devastation [of] the Los Angeles fires ... could have been so much worse without the hard work of the L.A. Fire Department."

Jeannette Perez
PRESIDENT/CCO
Rani Hancock
EXECUTIVE VP/HEAD OF U.S. CREATIVE
Leslie Ahrens
SENIOR VP OF CREATIVE, LATIN AMERICA
Kobalt

Kobalt's all-star songwriting roster — which already includes Phoebe Bridgers, Childish Gambino and Ovy on the Drums — added talent like Yamil, the Puerto Rican producer behind FloyyMenor and Cris MJ's 14-week Hot Latin Songs No. 1, "Gata Only"; Mexican folk singer/composer Kevin Kaarl; and Stargate's Tor Hermansen. And its global digital collections society, AMRA, "continues to revolutionize royalty collection with groundbreaking technology and unparalleled accuracy. This ensures creators are paid faster and more fairly than ever before," Perez says. "Kobalt is known for stepping outside its comfort zone, embracing new industry challenges and innovating, and we will continue to be change-makers in 2025."
CHARITY I SUPPORT "Planned Parenthood," Perez says, "for all of the obvious reasons."

Katie Welle
PRESIDENT/HEAD OF U.S. A&R
Anna Weisband
VP OF CREATIVE
Maggie Martin
VP OF CREATIVE MARKETING, FILM AND TV
Scout Easley
SENIOR DIRECTOR OF CREATIVE
Monica Jordan
DIRECTOR OF LATIN
Sony Music Publishing

Sony Music Publishing had a banner year, and these women led the charge. SMP renewed its deal with country sensation Lainey Wilson, signed new stars like Myles Smith and opened a studio and creative hub in Los Angeles. Easley is also proud of the success of Chappell Roan's *The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess* (produced by Dan Nigro), which reached No. 2 on the Billboard 200 and landed six tracks on the Hot 100. "The album has resonated with audiences worldwide and is a testament to their hard work and creative passion," Easley says.
CHARITY I SUPPORT "ACLU and For the Gworls," Easley says, "because they are both great organizations that fight to protect rights and provide crucial assistance to marginalized communities."

Streaming

Phylicia Fant
HEAD OF MUSIC INDUSTRY AND CULTURE COLLABORATIONS
Katie Klein
HEAD OF CONTENT STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT
Amy Grabisch
HEAD OF SPONSORSHIPS FOR LIVESTREAMING
Karen Pettyjohn
HEAD OF U.S. PROGRAMMING
Amazon Music

For Fant, Amazon Music's celebration of homecoming season for historically Black colleges and universities was something to be proud of this past year. "As part of this program, we planned a special episode [featuring Big Sean] of our livestreamed concert series, *Amazon Music Live*, to provide a national stage for the incredible talent" coming out of HBCUs, says Fant, who graduated from Spelman College. "We also used the moment to announce the return of the Your Future Is Now scholarship program with the Recording Academy's Black Music Collective." The program offered students $10,000 and the chance to spend time with Amazon Music executives.
ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Remain true to your authentic self in your career," Fant says. "Everyone feels the pressure to sand down their edges to better fit into an organization or an industry — I know I have. But there's no one type of woman in the industry."

Vivien Lewit
GLOBAL HEAD OF ARTISTS
Joanne Suk
GLOBAL HEAD OF MUSIC PUBLISHING
Sandra Jimenez
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC, LATIN AMERICA
YouTube

"We are so proud of our work with songwriters and producers, from launching song credits across various YouTube surfaces to helping songwriters tell their stories through the reach of YouTube," Suk says. "We've hosted songwriter camps around the world that bring together emerging and established talents to write the songs of tomorrow." She also cites YouTube's partnership with top creatives "as part of our Music AI Incubator and across our GenAI work to ensure their voices influence the development of responsible tools to enhance creativity. The momentum we're building within this vital group of creators is very exciting."
ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Find your superpower, own it and believe it," Suk says. "Put in the hard work and seek out the opportunities to learn as much as possible from those who are at the top of their game whom you respect and admire."

THE CHARLES-FISHMAN FAMILY

IN MEMORIAM

Twitch's Cindy Charles

Twitch head of music Cindy Charles died in October following a traffic accident in the Netherlands. Twitch CEO Daniel Clancy said in a statement after the 69-year-old executive's death that "anyone that uses music on Twitch owes a debt of gratitude to Cindy's work."

Clancy described Charles as always having a bright smile, even as she negotiated "unprecedented music licensing agreements for Twitch."

Last June, Charles completed a deal that covers DJs who livestream on the platform plus music licensing agreements with Universal Music Group, Warner Music Group and Sony Music Entertainment — as well as many indie labels represented by Merlin.

Charles was due to speak at the Amsterdam Dance Event to offer expertise to DJs who use Twitch when the accident occurred.

At Twitch, Charles led the music team in fostering partnerships with labels, publishers and performing rights organizations while helping artists establish a presence on the platform. Prior to that, she worked as the head of business development in the music department of Amazon Tickets. At Amazon, she also served as head of development in the video shorts department.

Earlier in her career, she was a consultant in the digital music space, working with platforms and apps like Spotify and Beats Music to help them navigate the music business. She also spent time at Viacom and more than eight years at MediaNet Digital.

"Cindy held numerous positions of influence, but what she did outside of her day-to-day was nothing short of remarkable," said Kira Karlstrom, Twitch's head of music label relations, content development and programming. She notes Charles' work as an adviser to the board of governors at the Recording Academy and as co-founder of both Women in Digital and the San Francisco chapter of She Is the Music.

"Behind the scenes, Cindy never stopped advocating for the causes she believed in," Karlstrom said. "She was relentless in the best way: fighting for what was right, taking calculated risks and rallying people around her mission."

Charles is survived by her husband, Ricky Fishman, and their two sons.

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Devi Mahadevia
SENIOR VP OF STRATEGY
Emmy Lovell
GLOBAL HEAD OF MUSIC
SoundCloud

"Over the past 18 months, I've had the privilege of leading and contributing to transformative partnerships at SoundCloud that are reshaping the way fans and artists connect," Mahadevia says. By collaborating with innovative and ethical AI partners like FADR, Soundful, Voice-Swap, Tuney, Tuttii and AIBeatz, SoundCloud is developing ways for fans to engage with music and for artists to amplify their creative impact, according to the company. Mahadevia highlights the launch of SoundCloud's new artist tier subscription, which makes it easier for creators to share and monetize their music. "Seeing these efforts come to life and unlock opportunities for creators is deeply rewarding," she says. "I'm excited to continue building on this momentum."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Cultivate curiosity to fuel a growth mindset and strengthen adaptability," Mahadevia says. "In a rapidly changing world, being open-minded and inquisitive is essential for uncovering new opportunities and staying ahead."

Amanda Marks
GLOBAL HEAD OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, SHAZAM AND MUSIC PARTNERS
Apple
Natalie Eshaya
HEAD OF APPLE MUSIC RADIO
Rachel Newman
SENIOR DIRECTOR, APPLE MUSIC CONTENT AND EDITORIAL
Patty Flores
HEAD OF U.S. LATIN MUSIC BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS
Marissa Lopez
LATIN ARTIST RELATIONS
Apple Music

In 2024, Newman says, Apple Music's efforts were buttressed by a key company philosophy. "We have really leaned into one of our most core attributes as a company this past year: weaving the humanities into everything we do," she says. Among the "integrated initiatives," Apple Music remains the sponsor for the Super Bowl halftime show, which featured Kendrick Lamar in February. The streaming service also launched its Apple Music 100 Best Albums editorial initiative and produced multiple live performances, including Björk's New Year's Eve event in London. The Shazam team launched Music Haptics, which provides iPhone users who are deaf or hard of hearing a new way to experience music through a nuanced and dynamic series of vibrations, according to Marks.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "For younger women, we need to prepare them well," Newman says. "And not just for the bad, but also the good."

Sulinna Ong
GLOBAL HEAD OF EDITORIAL FOR MUSIC
Madeleine Bennett
HEAD OF MUSIC GO-TO-MARKET
Monica Damashek
HEAD OF ARTIST AND LABEL PARTNERSHIPS
Ashley Graver
HEAD OF POP, DANCE AND INDIE ARTIST PARTNERSHIPS
Spotify

"We doubled down on breaking artists last year," Damashek says of Spotify's achievements in 2024. She highlights the streaming platform's support of country artists such as Shaboozey, whose "A Bar Song (Tipsy)" tied the Lil Nas X-Billy Ray Cyrus collaboration "Old Town Road" for a record 19 weeks atop the Hot 100, and Tucker Wetmore, whose "Wine Into Whiskey" peaked at No. 16 on the Hot Country Songs chart and broke onto the Hot 100. Spotify also launched album campaigns and tour partnerships with Sabrina Carpenter, Benson Boone and Tyla; recognized the new generation of women in hip-hop including GloRilla; and amplified regional Mexican music artists such as Ivan Cornejo. Adds Damashek: "We're excited to stay focused on this in the year ahead."

CHARITY I SUPPORT "Back when I was a journalist," Damashek says, "I started supporting Girls Write Now, which pairs up professional writers with girls from underserved communities for mentorship."

Live

Claudia Arcay
SENIOR VP OF ENTERTAINMENT
Loud And Live

Arcay's efforts led to the direct negotiation and execution of some of Loud And Live's most successful tours, including treks by Laura Pausini, Silvestre Dangond, Camilo, Reik, Carlos Rivera, Pandora y Flans and Natalia Jiménez. Arcay also led the reunion of iconic Venezuelan duo Chino y Nacho, who performed together for the first time in years for a successful U.S. tour. And, as part of Loud And Live's continued expansion into Latin America, she secured, managed and produced "high-grossing" arena shows with George Harris in Chile, Camilo and Laura Pausini in Colombia, Jesús Adrián Romero in Mexico and Kany García in the Dominican Republic, among others.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Take a deep breath, listen to your favorite artist with full volume, light a candle, and please don't forget the wine. *Tumba la casa.*"

Michele Bernstein
OWNER
Michi B

Bernstein pivoted during the pandemic to launch her company Michi B to market top-name tours, with WME as one of her first clients. Working on an array of top-selling outings in the past year, Bernstein highlights the "success of the Dead & Company Sphere residency with 48 shows total, Kendrick Lamar and SZA's Grand National stadium tour, growing Ivan Cornejo into an arena headliner and developing podcasts for touring." Among her other touring clients: Bruno Mars, Lizzo, Machine Gun Kelly, Tool, Pearl Jam, Eddie Vedder's Ohana Festival, Muse, Disturbed and Greta Van Fleet. She launched the live business of Alex Cooper's *Call Her Daddy* podcast with a sold-out tour, oversaw all marketing of Drake's six-month art carnival residency at Luna Luna and markets the illuminated holiday walking trails attraction Lightscape.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "[I take a] long walk with my dog, Dexter."

Francesca Bodie
COO
Kim Theetge
VP OF OPERATIONS, CFG BANK ARENA
Oak View Group

Despite the delayed opening of Co-op Live in Manchester, England, the largest arena in the United Kingdom, Bodie calls the debut of Oak View Group's sustainably built 23,500-capacity venue a highlight of 2024. "It really tested our team, but we delivered a one-of-a-kind experience for guests and artists, and the feedback has been incredible," she says. In the past year, OVG also acquired Invited's Stadium Clubs division and launched OVG Middle East. It also created a dedicated stadium team, OVG Stadia, a 360 services team in the United Kingdom. "In 2025," Bodie adds, "we are also looking forward to the [launching] of two newly reimagined arenas in Hamilton, Ontario, and Hartford, Conn."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "My advice for younger women is to give yourself the time and grace to explore what really matters to you," Bodie says. "It's easy to find a meaningful career when you've allowed yourself the flexibility to try, fail and succeed at multiple things that capture your interest."

SANTIAGO FELIPE/REDFERNS

Icelandic artist BJÖRK presented a rare DJ set in London on New Year's Eve as one of the featured artists on the livestream *Apple Music Live: NYE*.

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ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT

> "In the immortal words of Taylor Swift, 'Fuck the patriarchy!' Don't be afraid to speak up. The music industry has changed so much — I love seeing women in every imaginable role. Many tours have female lighting, sound and video techs, but we need more representation in the production side of things."
>
> —**Mary Conde**, senior vp of production/GM of Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, Another Planet Entertainment

DREW ALTIZER

Emma Bownes
SENIOR VP OF VENUE PROGRAMMING

AEG Europe

Samantha Fernandez
VP OF PARTNERSHIP ACTIVATION FOR GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

Alicia Karlin
VP OF GLOBAL TOURING AND TALENT

AEG Presents

Connie Shao
VP/GM OF INTERNATIONAL TOURING

AEG Presents U.K.

Last year, Fernandez's team secured 350 brand partnerships for festivals including Coachella, Stagecoach and Camp Flog Gnaw, while demand for international touring, the area Shao oversees, has doubled. Karlin had her hands full with Sabrina Carpenter's in-demand *Short n' Sweet* tour, and AEG had record-breaking success across its European venues, with London's O2 Arena reporting selling over 2.6 million tickets and its three German arenas (Berlin's Uber Arena and Uber Eats Music Hall and Hamburg's Barclays Arena) experiencing 11.5% year-over-year growth. "This is all down to the fantastic team of bookers that we have working across AEG Europe," Bownes says. "They are passionate, committed and really great fun to work with — even despite how busy they all are."

CHARITY I SUPPORT "I'm really proud to be on the board of the Music Venues Trust," Bownes says, which does "such incredible and important work in protecting our grassroots venues in the U.K."

Christy Castillo Butcher
SENIOR VP OF PROGRAMMING AND BOOKING

SoFi Stadium/YouTube Theater/Hollywood Park

Last year produced substantial growth for SoFi Stadium, YouTube Theater and Hollywood Park, as the venues worked to cross-promote global sports and music events. Besides SoFi's two tenant NFL teams, the venue welcomed The Rolling Stones, Green Day, Def Leppard and BTS in 2024, along with international soccer matches and soul festival Fool in Love on the Hollywood Park grounds. The 6,000-capacity YouTube Theater hosted performances from John Legend, Latto, Residente, Stone Temple Pilots and an 85th-birthday celebration for Mavis Staples. In addition, Castillo Butcher says, "The opening of Hollywood Park's retail district further enhanced the visitor experience, complementing our year-round entertainment offerings."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Create your village. Some call it a board of directors or a network. Either way, you will need a support system to lean on throughout your career to help you navigate all phases of life."

Mary Conde
SENIOR VP OF PRODUCTION/GM OF BILL GRAHAM CIVIC AUDITORIUM

Another Planet Entertainment

In 2024, Another Planet Entertainment followed its beloved August festival, Outside Lands, in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park with a one-off System of a Down-Deftones show the following weekend — a first for the park. The promoter has another such concert, featuring Zach Bryan and Kings of Leon, planned this summer. And amid the robust suite of venues it operates and books, Conde is particularly excited about the company's ongoing renovation of San Francisco's iconic Castro Theatre: "I can't wait to have the building open and welcoming guests."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "In the immortal words of Taylor Swift, 'Fuck the patriarchy!' Don't be afraid to speak up. The music industry has changed so much — I love seeing women in every imaginable role. Many tours have female lighting, sound and video techs, but we need more representation in the production side of things."

Mari Davies
VP OF BOOKING AND TALENT

Live Nation Urban

"We experienced an incredible year of milestones for our festivals in 2024," Davies says. The Roots Picnic in Philadelphia — which boasted talent including Gunna, Lil Wayne, Sexyy Red, Leon Thomas and Tyla last year — celebrated its biggest and most successful event to date, "solidifying its legacy as a cultural institution," Davies adds. Mary J. Blige's Strength of a Woman festival relocated from Atlanta to New York and expanded in scale, while the Broccoli City festival in Washington, D.C., moved to Audi Field, "which allowed us to elevate the experience for attendees and artists alike," she adds. "2024 truly marked a year of growth, innovation and celebration for our organization."

CHARITY I SUPPORT "The L.A. Mission. They provide housing and resources to the unhoused of L.A. 365 days a year. I volunteer there frequently. As a native Angelino, I can attest to how important the work they do there is for our city."

Carolina Daza
HEAD OF LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Cárdenas Marketing Network

Daza helped drive a milestone year at Cárdenas Marketing Network in 2024, assisting in orchestrating the successful Cerrando Ciclos Tour for New York Dominican icons Aventura across Latin America. (*Billboard* readers named it the best Latin tour of 2024.) The trek has already landed in the top 10 highest-grossing Latin tours of all time, earning $132.6 million with attendance of 1.8 million, and more shows are on the schedule. Additionally, Daza managed Mexican legend Luis Miguel's 2023-24 world tour, which became the highest-grossing Latin tour ever, earning over $300 million and counting.

CHARITY I SUPPORT "Maestro Cares," Daza says of the charity established by Marc Anthony. "Most recently, they have focused on providing access to education through a scholarship program supporting Latin students pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees in the U.S. and Latin America."

Kate Des Enfants McMahon
EXECUTIVE VP

Rachel Powers
VP OF MARKETING

Lauren Caire
VP OF FINANCE

Messina Touring Group

Messina Touring Group is best known as the promoter for Taylor Swift and her record-shattering The Eras Tour. But the company promotes several other big-name acts, including George Strait, who set the record for the largest U.S. ticketed show when he drew over 110,000 in College Station, Texas, last June. "Our show took over the city," Des Enfants McMahon says, citing its population of 125,000. "Considering the huge numbers, the intense love of George and high temps — it was the most beautiful, relaxed and appreciative crowd." Strait appeared on Billboard Boxscore's year-end 2024 Top Tours chart alongside MTG acts Ed Sheeran and Kenny Chesney.

CHARITY I SUPPORT "RED Arena outside of Austin," Des Enfants McMahon says. "It offers equine therapy to children, and what they accomplish is amazing. Many of the kids are in hospitals and doctors' offices all the time, but the barn doesn't feel like the hospital and horses are magical."

Meagan DesChenes
HEAD OF TALENT AND FESTIVALS

Insomniac Events

In 2024, Insomniac produced 500 festivals and other dance music events across 10 regions including North America, Europe, Asia and Australia. This number of events was a record high for the always prolific Insomniac, and DesChenes also notes "a remarkable 16% increase in attendance" at events during the year. The company's flagship festival, Electric Daisy Carnival Las Vegas, drew 525,000 attendees over three days in May, according to Insomniac. Witnessing and helping foster this growing global dance music community is, she says, "incredibly rewarding."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Whenever I face a challenge, I remind myself that I've always found a way through in the past. It's important to stay calm and maintain a clear head when dealing with obstacles, as that perspective helps me navigate even the toughest situations."

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DANIELLE AGUIRRE

NMPA EVP & GENERAL COUNSEL

HALL OF FAME HONOREE

CHARLOTTE SELLMYER

NMPA SVP, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

WOMEN IN MUSIC HONOREE

NMPA

IS ABOUT THE SONGS

Maureen Ford
HEAD OF NATIONAL AND FESTIVAL SALES

Live Nation Media and Sponsorship

Julie Matway
COO OF COUNTRY NATION

Kelly Strickland
PRESIDENT OF U.S. TOUR MARKETING

Deirdre McCready
EXECUTIVE VP OF SALES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Cindy Agi
GLOBAL TOUR PROMOTER

Live Nation

Live Nation continues to see success in ticket sales, revenue and more. Through Ford, the marketing department strengthened partnerships with prominent brands including Citi, Hilton, Chase, Wrangler, Hulu and Dunkin'. McCready and her team secured nearly 3,000 special events for Venue Nation with high-profile shows around Super Bowl LVIII in Las Vegas at Brooklyn Bowl and House of Blues. Strickland led marketing for some of the biggest tours of 2024 with acts including Red Hot Chili Peppers, Dead & Company and Billie Eilish. Since joining Live Nation in 2021, Agi has been amplifying African voices globally, bringing the festival Afronation to Miami. "As we look at what's to come in 2025," Agi says, "I'm focused on expanding touring opportunities for Afrobeats artists, bringing them to new markets and bigger rooms around the world."

Margaret Galton
SENIOR TALENT BUYER

C3 Presents

Galton booked and coordinated more than 145 artists for the annual Austin City Limits festival scheduled over two weekends in October and worked closely with Live Nation partners OCESA and Apodaca to book and produce the Live Out Music Festival in Monterrey, Mexico. She also curated the second Two Step Inn festival in Georgetown, Texas, while booking hundreds of shows at local venues. "I am honestly in awe of the creativity and attention to detail our festival team puts into show after show," Galton says. Two Step Inn faced extreme rain conditions in April, and every member of the festival team worked together to keep attendees safe. "It is a ton of moving parts," she says, "and our fest team makes it seem effortless."

CHARITY I SUPPORT "Everytown, Out Youth and Planned Parenthood. Now more than ever, we need to support the organizations that work to end gun violence, support LGBTQIA+ youth and protect reproductive rights."

Chrissy Hall
DIRECTOR OF CONCERTS

Opry Entertainment

The Ryman Auditorium hosted over 250 shows in 2024, including underplays for Shawn Mendes, Kacey Musgraves, Billy Strings, Gracie Abrams and Laufey, as well as residencies for acts including Clint Black, Mitski, Vince Gill, The Red Clay Strays, Jason Isbell, Leon Bridges, and Amy Grant and Vince Gill's annual Christmas at the Ryman concert. "Every show brings its own magic, and it's an honor to be a part of it," Hall says. That ethos helped the historic Ryman earn its eighth ACM theater of the year award. "These wins mean so much because they reflect the heart of what we do," Hall says, "our team's dedication, the incredible artists who grace our stage and the fans who make this venue what it is."

CHARITY I SUPPORT "I volunteer at Saddle Up! It is a barn that provides children with disabilities educational and recreational activities with horses."

Bettie Levy
FOUNDER

BCL Entertainment

New York-based event producer and brand partnership company BCL Entertainment capped off 2024 with purpose. One of its long-standing partnerships between sports brand Fanatics, Grammy winner Darius Rucker and sports leagues including the NFL, MLB, NCAA and NHL was picked up by Boston University, which is Levy's alma mater. "It was a real full-circle moment," she says. Since BCL's founding 15 years ago, Levy has worked with a range of acts including Ludacris, Marc Anthony, 50 Cent, Ice Spice, Chaka Khan, J Balvin, The Chainsmokers and Usher. Levy says her success "would not have been possible without the unwavering support of my family, friends, colleagues and clients."

CHARITY I SUPPORT "One of the first charities we ever supported, and still do, is Room To Read, an organization that is creating a world free from illiteracy and gender inequality through education."

Heather Lowery
PRESIDENT/CEO

Femme It Forward

"This past year has been nothing short of monumental," says Lowery, who celebrated five years of Femme It Forward — her partnership with Live Nation — in 2024. Femme It Forward launched the MUSE mentorship program, pairing iconic women like Alicia Keys, Erykah Badu and Teyana Taylor with rising stars to shape the future of music and hosted its first-ever Femme It Forward High Tea during Grammy Week, a powerful celebration of women leading in this industry. Last year also brought the third annual Give Her FlowHERS Awards Gala, which honors artists, creatives and visionaries — including 2024 honorees Doechii, GloRilla, Jill Scott and Chloe + Halle — who are uplifting their communities and driving change. "We're committed to breaking barriers and creating meaningful opportunities to empower women in the music industry while inspiring the next generation of trailblazers," Lowery says.

Kristen Sten
GM, GREEK THEATRE

Jackie Naparlo
DIRECTOR OF BOOKING, RICHMOND THEATERS/REGIONAL BOOKING DIRECTOR, ARENAS SOUTHEAST

ASM Global

In August, AEG and Canadian private equity firm Onex closed on the sale of facility management firm ASM Global, which works with venues including Los Angeles' Greek Theatre and Dubai's Coca-Cola Arena to Legends for $2.3 billion. With ASM Global, Legends now has 400 clients under management and, in 2024 alone, the Greek welcomed André 3000, Tems, Bleachers, Indigo Girls, Gracie Abrams and more. Naparlo is excited about ASM and Legends' future. "Together, our companies will raise the fan experience and deliver unmatched, unforgettable and immersive entertainment," she says. "Whether it's sports, music, theater or comedy, this is a powerhouse combination — like Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion getting together."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Something from former President Barack Obama that resonated with me: 'Just learn how to get things done,' " Naparlo says. "It's simple yet powerful."

Josephine Vaccarello
EXECUTIVE VP OF LIVE

Madison Square Garden Entertainment/Sphere Entertainment

In its first full year of operation, the state-of-the-art Las Vegas venue Sphere hosted residencies by U2, Phish, Dead & Company, the Eagles and Anyma — and as it prepares to welcome its first country artist, Kenny Chesney, in May and June, Vaccarello says, "We are just scratching the surface" of Sphere's potential. The residency model, she adds, remains a winner at other MSGE properties like its namesake arena and Radio City Music Hall: "We also continued to successfully execute on our strategy of booking multinight runs in a wide variety of genres across our venues," she says, "including Jerry Seinfeld, Olivia Rodrigo, Tina Fey and Amy Poehler, John Oliver and Seth Meyers, Noah Kahan, Sebastian Maniscalco and Odesza."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Focus on the things you can control — and if you can't control it, just keep moving forward."

Stacy Vee
EXECUTIVE VP

Rhea Roberts-Johnson
VP OF OPERATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Goldenvoice

AEG-owned Goldenvoice recently completed extensive renovations at The Shrine Auditorium and Expo Hall in Downtown Los Angeles, as well as The Regency Ballroom in San Francisco. "Additionally, we launched the Goldenvoice Concerts app, which offers exclusive content from artists and Goldenvoice, special ticket deals and serves as a hub for fans seeking an enhanced concert experience," Roberts-Johnson says. "We also introduced the New Gold Standard series, where we spotlight artists' journeys within Goldenvoice, from clubs to stadiums. One of the most rewarding aspects of our work is witnessing artist growth, and Goldenvoice truly excels in artist development. Our diverse portfolio of festivals continues to stand out with amazing lineups and unmatched experiences."

CHARITY I SUPPORT "Union Rescue Mission and its sister shelter, Hope Gardens, hold a special place in my heart," Roberts-Johnson says. "Homelessness has become a crisis in many parts of California, deeply affecting the communities we serve."

ALICIA KEYS is among the stars mentoring rising artists through the MUSE program created by Femme It Forward, the female-led company that advocates for women in the music and entertainment industries.

BRUCE GLIKAS/WIREIMAGE

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CONGRATULATIONS

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Kim Theetge

VP of Operations at CFG Bank Arena

CFG BANK ARENA

OVG
OAK VIEW GROUP

Agencies

Jenna Adler
MUSIC AGENT
Marlene Tsuchii
CO-HEAD OF INTERNATIONAL TOURING/MUSIC AGENT
Jen Hammel
Carly James
Cheryl Paglierani
MUSIC AGENTS
CAA

Adler has been named one of *Billboard*'s Women in Music Executives of the Year (see story, page 88). CAA had a banner year in 2024 with headline-making tours. Tsuchii booked Tool's first South American trek and helped Sabrina Carpenter confirm her star status with the *Short n' Sweet* tour that hit international markets in 2025. Paglierani brought to life Post Malone's first country tour, including sold-out shows at Boston's Fenway Park and Nashville's Nissan Stadium. Hammel brought music producer Sara Landry to 80,000 fans at Tomorrowland, according to CAA, while James booked girl in red's largest tour to date with sold-out shows at New York's Radio City Music Hall; Red Rocks Amphitheatre in Morrison, Colo.; and Los Angeles' Greek Theatre.

CHARITY I SUPPORT Tsuchii points to "the incredible work done by our colleague Natalie Tran and the CAA Foundation group to quickly create the SoCal Fire fund in response to the recent fires in L.A."

Lucy Dickins
GLOBAL HEAD OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC AND TOURING
Dvora Englefield
PARTNER/HEAD OF MUSIC ARTIST STRATEGY
Stephanie LaFera
PARTNER/HEAD OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC
Beth Hamilton
Carrie Paglinco
AGENTS
WME

Dickins has been named one of *Billboard*'s Women in Music Executives of the Year (see story, page 88). Englefield says the agency's support of community and artist initiatives "remains at the forefront, especially with the most recent wildfire devastation in our own hometown headquarters of Los Angeles." Beyond directing funds to affected employees, WME's ongoing partnership with the Anti-Recidivism Coalition raised money for incarcerated fire crews fighting on the front lines. This work comes in tandem with "one of the most successful years in music for WME," according to Englefield, with clients including Adele, Olivia Rodrigo, Zach Bryan, Bruno Mars, Linkin Park, Coldplay, Luis Miguel, The Killers, Lainey Wilson, Billie Eilish and FINNEAS, and Tyler, The Creator, clocking huge successes across releases, residencies, festival shows and world tours.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Lead by example and support colleagues and friends the way you would want to be supported," Englefield says.

Samantha Kirby Yoh
PARTNER/CO-HEAD OF GLOBAL MUSIC
Alisann Blood
Sara Schoch
CO-HEADS OF GLOBAL MUSIC BRAND PARTNERSHIPS
Nicole Schoen Visconti
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC TOUR MARKETING
Elisa Vazzana
MUSIC AGENT
UTA

Kirby Yoh has been named one of *Billboard*'s Women in Music Executives of the Year (see story, page 88). "Over the past year," Vazzana says, "Megan Moroney's incredible career growth has been a true testament to the collaborative efforts of UTA." The team booked Moroney's sold-out, 50-date *Am I Okay?* tour — selling over 165,000 tickets in under 15 minutes, according to UTA — to securing her first amphitheater and stadium support for Kenny Chesney on his Sun Goes Down Tour. The music brand partnerships division secured deals, including Moroney's groundbreaking collaboration with Charlotte Tilbury, marking the beauty brand's first partnership with a country artist, as well as Moroney's deal with Alani Nu. "By aligning our expertise across divisions," Vazzana adds, "UTA's collective teams were able to execute Megan's vision, and we're excited to celebrate all her success along the way."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Work hard, take credit for your contributions, and be your own biggest advocate," Vazzana says.

Cara Lewis
FOUNDER/CEO
Cara Lewis Group

Lewis has been named one of *Billboard*'s Women in Music Executives of the Year (see story, page 88). Under her leadership, the Cara Lewis Group enjoyed another year of major wins in 2024, including Travis Scott's Circus Maximus Tour, which grossed nearly $210 million and marked the first time a rapper performed in — and sold out — SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, Calif. The many high-profile tours that CLG represented in 2024 included Eminem, Don Toliver, Bryson Tiller, Ice Spice, Russ, Erykah Badu, GloRilla and Mike Dean. "Success can't and shouldn't come overnight — greatness and longevity is crafted through hard work and time invested," Lewis says of her career trajectory.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Never become complacent, always remain hungry, and never take no for an answer."

Paige Maloney
Kiely Mosiman
VPs
Mallory Smith
DIRECTOR OF BRAND PARTNERSHIPS
Anna Bewers
AGENT
Wasserman Music

Wasserman agents helped build buzz in 2024, from Maloney helping to book Noah Kahan for two sold-out nights at Boston's Fenway Park to Mosiman and Bewers working alongside Chappell Roan, who performed to a record-breaking crowd at Lollapalooza. Mosiman says that, given Wasserman is still a relatively young agency, "our biggest success is in our culture and our people. We've created a collaborative environment where the only question that matters is what's best for each artist." Among the basic principles that allow the team to serve its artists with such success, she says, is simply "everyone picking up the phone and answering questions with full transparency."

CHARITY I SUPPORT "I've been inspired by the Altadena Girls fund [organized by an Altadena, Calif., student in eighth grade], which helps teen girls who've lost everything [in the L.A. fires] to keep some sense of normalcy in the face of the unimaginable," Mosiman says.

Marsha Vlasic
CO-CHAIR OF THE MUSIC DIVISION
Lila Gerson
HEAD OF BRAND PARTNERSHIPS AND STRATEGIC MARKETING
Becca Wilson
HEAD OF TOUR MARKETING
Independent Artist Group

Vlasic has been named one of *Billboard*'s Women in Music Executives of the Year (see story, page 88). Last July, IAG client Billy Joel completed his historic 10-plus-year residency at Madison Square Garden with $266.7 million earned and more than 1.9 million tickets sold. Vlasic says she also booked a 47-city headline arena tour for Cage the Elephant and headlining dates for Norah Jones and PJ Harvey. The industry veteran adds that she is "beyond excited that our client Noel Gallagher will be part of the biggest tour of the year with the Oasis reunion," which is slated to begin in Cardiff, Wales, in July before hitting North America for seven stadium dates. And longtime client Neil Young will open a 2025 tour in Sweden on June 18.

CHARITY I SUPPORT "The T.J. Martell [Foundation]," Vlasic says, "because I remember when Tony Martell's son died [of leukemia] and the promise he made to him."

DAWN JONES-GARCIA

CHARITY I SUPPORT

> "RED Arena outside of Austin. It offers equine therapy to children, and what they accomplish is amazing. Many of the kids are in hospitals and doctors' offices all the time, but the barn doesn't feel like the hospital and horses are magical."
>
> **—Kate Des Enfants McMahon**, executive vp, Messina Touring Group

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WOMEN IN MUSIC

HONOREE

KRISTEN STEN

GENERAL MANAGER - THE GREEK THEATRE

THE GREEK THEATRE

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Media

Alessandra Alarcón

PRESIDENT OF ENTERTAINMENT

Spanish Broadcasting System

Alarcón is especially excited about the renewed interest in salsa music. She points out that SBS is the only broadcaster that has multiple radio stations dedicated to the genre and that its recent interview with Bad Bunny about his new Billboard 200 No. 1 album, *DeBÍ TiRAR MáS FOToS*, was the only one the Puerto Rican artist did with a U.S. radio station. "I am proud that we are keeping this legacy alive and the biggest artist in the world recognizes SBS as a conduit to what is culturally relevant and important to Latinos," she says.

CHARITY I SUPPORT "Not only have people lost their lives and homes [in the L.A. wildfires], but many Latinos in Los Angeles have lost their places of employment. Consider donating to the Red Cross, World Central Kitchen, the California Community Foundation and the Los Angeles Fire Department Foundation."

Mary Berner

PRESIDENT/CEO

Cumulus Media

"In 2024, Cumulus Media continued to make strides in integrating music, entertainment and technology to connect audiences and artists in new ways," Berner says. Cumulus expanded its digital platforms, including streaming services and podcast offerings, which she calls "a testament to our ability to adapt and thrive in an ever-evolving industry." Additionally, the broadcaster "solidified the groundbreaking Your Music Plus initiative as the premier music discovery program," Berner says. "This success was driven by featuring more high-profile artists and expanding collaboration opportunities." Among the artists launching exclusive campaigns promoting new releases: Coldplay, Kenny Chesney, Pearl Jam, Jelly Roll, Mötley Crüe, Fontaines D.C. and Jason Aldean.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Stay organized and active. For me, redoing my to-do list every single day helps me avoid feeling overwhelmed by breaking things down into manageable steps."

Alexa Cabellon

HEAD OF NORTH AMERICA MUSIC PUBLISHING PARTNERSHIPS

Sabrina Kartzman

HEAD OF MUSIC PRODUCT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Liz Miller

MUSIC ARTIST STRATEGY FOR GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

Meta

Meta doubled down on its investment in music in 2024, Kartzman says. "Music is a powerful tool for self-expression, connection and community-building." The social media company launched its Music on Profile feature in August on Instagram, giving users the ability to spice up their profiles with their favorite tunes. Meta even teamed up with Sabrina Carpenter to tease a snippet of the pop star's "Taste" single, which went on to debut at No. 2 on the Hot 100. "The product's successful adoption is a testament to music's ability to unite people and foster creative expression across our platform," Kartzman adds.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Know your worth," Kartzman says. "If your impact isn't being valued, sometimes the best way to move up is to move on."

Tracy Gardner

GLOBAL HEAD OF LABEL LICENSING AND PARTNERSHIPS

Rachel Dunham

ARTIST PARTNERSHIPS LEAD, NORTH AMERICA

TikTok

Last year was another eventful one for TikTok, spent mostly on the edge of a ban on operating in the United States, but the music team stayed focused on music. According to Dunham, 84% of songs that charted on the Billboard Global 200 in 2024 first went viral on TikTok. "This speaks to the power of music promotion on TikTok and the tireless work our team does to superserve artists," Dunham says, "ensuring they are able to engage with global fans and monetize daily."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Become the biggest advocate and champion for the women around you," Dunham says. "We are not each other's competition. One of the biggest drivers of your career will be your relationship with your peers."

Ingrid Graham

EXECUTIVE VP OF BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Telemundo

"In 2024, Telemundo shattered records and solidified its position as the No. 1 Spanish-language network in primetime, delivering strong numbers across our music tentpoles," says Graham, who had a direct hand in everything including negotiation, production and monetization of tentpoles ranging from the Billboard Latin Music Awards and Billboard Latin Women in Music to Telemundo's Conciertos de Verano and reality shows. Graham is particularly proud of a new partnership with HYBE and Exile Content Studio on a music reality project that takes the network into new areas of the music business. "Music continues to be an integral part of Telemundo's programming strategy," she says, "as it is in the lives and fabric of our Latino community."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Pause, take a deep breath and prioritize your time based on what is most important."

Cindy Hill

VP OF CONTENT AND INDUSTRY RELATIONS FOR UFORIA

TelevisaUnivision

Hill's recent achievements include curating and profiling a stellar lineup of artists including Xavi, Maluma, Christian Nodal, Kali Uchis, Becky G and Intocable on Uforia's digital and linear platforms for Uforia Music Series' private and arena shows. She brought together over 50 artists for this year's edition of the annual Uforia Music Showcase, which spotlights emerging talent. She led and developed strategic programming for Uforia's regional Mexican stations in Los Angeles, Houston, Dallas and Chicago, expanding audience reach to 3.7 million and securing No. 1 rankings for shows including *El Bueno la Mala y el Feo*, which won a 2024 Marconi Radio Award for best radio podcast of the year.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Nature and music have a way with helping me think through all that is going on and work through whatever is on my mind personally and professionally."

Thea Mitchem

EXECUTIVE VP OF PROGRAMMING/EXECUTIVE VP OF HIP-HOP AND R&B PROGRAMMING/PROGRAM DIRECTOR, WWPR (POWER 105.1) NEW YORK

Alissa Pollack

EXECUTIVE VP OF GLOBAL MUSIC MARKETING AND STRATEGY

Marissa Morris

SENIOR VP OF ARTIST RELATIONS

iHeartMedia

With iHeartMedia standing firm as one of the leading U.S. media conglomerates, with a monthly reach of 276 million subscribers, according to the company, its core mission remains connecting fans with their favorite performers. From supporting Beyoncé's Grammy-winning *Cowboy Carter* to premiering Taylor Swift's Billboard 200 chart-topping *The Tortured Poets Department* with the singer narrating stories about its songs' origins, iHeartMedia has built numerous exclusive programming events. Additionally, the team delivered immersive gaming experiences in iHeartLand — iHeartMedia's premiere destination in the metaverse accessible on Fortnite and Roblox — with acts like Coldplay and Khalid and produced a series of immersive virtual-reality release events featuring exclusive interviews.

CHARITY I SUPPORT "The Alliance for Women in Media foundation," Mitchem says. The organization "supports women across all media segments — music, podcasts, film — to expand networks and educate and celebrate accomplishments."

BRIAN MOLYNEAUX

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT

> "Know your worth. If your impact isn't being valued, sometimes the best way to move up is to move on."
>
> —**Sabrina Kartzman**, head of music product business development, Meta

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WOMEN IN MUSIC

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JACKIE NAPARLO

DIRECTOR OF BOOKING

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Connie Orlando

EXECUTIVE VP/HEAD OF SPECIALS, MUSIC PROGRAMMING AND MUSIC STRATEGY

BET Networks

BET had a lot to celebrate in the past year. It dominated cable awards shows among adults ages 18-49 with the BET Awards and the 55th NAACP Image Awards ranking among the top three. The BET Awards secured the No. 1 spot, "reaffirming its title as 'culture's biggest night,' " Orlando says. Usher, Tyla and Victoria Monét were among the big winners at the BET Awards, which were presented June 30. "The 2024 ceremony showcased BET's unmatched ability to convene the largest Black audiences, creating impactful and unforgettable cultural moments that resonate deeply within communities. BET's platforms remain a vital space for curating, celebrating and championing the richness and diversity of Black culture."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Break work into manageable steps, and don't hesitate to say no when necessary. Incorporate healthy habits like regular exercise, good sleep and mindfulness practices to stay grounded."

Nikki Walsh

VP OF SOUNDTRACK AND MARKETING, FILM MUSIC

Universal Pictures

Wicked was everywhere. From lighting up Manhattan's Empire State Building in pink and green to signature Starbucks drinks and partnering with over 400 corporate brands, Universal Pictures put on the full-court press with the blockbuster musical's unprecedented marketing and publicity blitz. "This was on another level of synergy and what our company calls 'symphony,' " Walsh says. "We aimed as high as possible in every area: consumer products, in-theater marketing, partnerships, digital, media and, of course, music and the soundtrack." Released in November, the *Wicked* film soundtrack landed at No. 2 on the Billboard 200, notching the highest debut for a big-screen adaptation of a stage musical.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "I try to carve out one weekend every month where I don't make any social plans and give myself grace to unplug as much as possible."

Krista Wegener

EXECUTIVE VP OF SALES AND DISTRIBUTION, PREMIUM CONTENT

Sony Music Vision

The success of the content studio's music documentaries and concert specials has been a point of pride for Wegener over the past year. "Whether it was *I Am: Celine Dion* becoming the most watched documentary of all time on Amazon Prime, *Billy Joel: The 100th Live at Madison Square Garden* winning three Emmys or *Luther: Never Too Much* being embraced by cinemagoers," she says, "it is immensely rewarding to work with world-class filmmakers to bring iconic stories and performances from Sony Music's artists to audiences around the world."

CHARITY I SUPPORT "I had the opportunity to participate in Women in Entertainment's mentorship program with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Los Angeles this year, and it was inspiring to spend time with my mentee and her cohort — all of whom were bright, ambitious, motivated young women with a passion for the entertainment industry."

ARIANA GRANDE's starring role in *Wicked* landed the singer an Academy Award nomination, while the soundtrack garnered the highest debut for a big-screen adaptation of a stage musical ever on the Billboard 200.

GILES KEYTE/UNIVERSAL PICTURES

Jennifer Witz

CEO

Gurj Bassi

VP OF CONTENT MARKETING AND PARTNERSHIPS

Racheal Spangler

VP OF ARTIST AND INDUSTRY RELATIONS

SiriusXM

To promote the launch of SiriusXM's new app, Spangler and her team secured the biggest artists across genres to host guest DJ sets, including Olivia Rodrigo, Billie Eilish, Ozuna, Dua Lipa, Selena Gomez, Cardi B, Adam Levine, and Ad-Rock and Mike D from the Beastie Boys. SiriusXM also hosted exclusive subscriber shows including Maluma in Las Vegas days before Super Bowl LVIII, a Green Day *Saviors* album underplay in New York and Jelly Roll at The Stephen Talkhouse in the Hamptons on Long Island. SiriusXM's Next Wave Concert Series, which spotlights the next generation of artists, spotlighted Australian duo Royel Otis, whose cover of The Cranberries' iconic hit "Linger" amassed 28 million TikTok views and almost 20 million on YouTube, according to Bassi.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Work hard and don't be afraid to ask for more responsibility," Spangler says. "Work ethic and ambition are so hard to teach yet are often the first traits we identify in future stars."

Business, Finance And Legal

Uwonda S. Carter

FOUNDING PARTNER/CHIEF REVENUE OFFICER

Carter + Woodard

Carter negotiated Metro Boomin's new publishing administration agreement with Universal Music Publishing Group and represented the superstar for the release of his joint albums with Future, *We Don't Trust You* and *We Still Don't Trust You*, which included the Grammy-nominated Hot 100 No. 1 hit "Like That" with Kendrick Lamar. The two releases earned four Grammy nominations, including best rap album for *We Don't Trust You*. Carter also represented Muni Long on the release of *Revenge* and negotiated several deals for Lil Yachty, including for his podcast, *A Safe Place*, and his album release *Bad Cameo* with James Blake.

CHARITY I SUPPORT "I serve on the board of directors for the Family Health Care Centers of Georgia and as an adviser to Thank Me Later — a financial literacy brand that helps women create, build and transfer wealth so they can leave a legacy — and its premier initiative, Black Women Will."

billboard
Women
in Music

CONGRATULATIONS

ALEXANDRA MOORE
CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICER, EMPIRE

TINA DAVIS
PRESIDENT, EMPIRE

HEATHER VASSAR
SVP, OPERATIONS - NASHVILLE, EMPIRE

EMPIRE

Sherrese Clarke Soares
FOUNDER/CEO
HarbourView Equity Partners

"HarbourView has cemented itself as a visionary leader, stepping outside traditional lanes to build an ecosystem around content and creators," Clarke Soares says. "This year, we made significant strides in the media space, including independently financing a slate of hip-hop biopics, starting with one about Queen Latifah." The company is also co-producing and co-financing *Usher: Rendezvous in Paris* and is investing in the Sony Pictures-Mucho Mas Media feature *La Bamba*. "Guided by my belief that content is queen," Clarke Soares says, "we've assembled a culturally connected team to support the purveyors of premium content across entertainment, sports and media. HarbourView values the long-term impact of [intellectual property] and continues to make strategic investments that preserve and elevate culture."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Have 'main character energy.' In the words of the great poet Tyler, The Creator: 'Don't let anyone dim your motherfucking light.' "

Tina Fasbender
FOUNDER/PRESIDENT
Fasbender Financial Management

Fasbender — who has spent nearly four decades running a business management firm for touring artists, songwriters, producers, mixers and engineers — recently branched out beyond music, bringing those same services to top executives and other elite clientele. "We will offer access to tax, wealth, insurance and trust services. We have a pristine reputation with the industry's best banking teams," she says. "We felt that our infrastructure could bring significant value to C-suite executives and professional service individuals. We will be acting as their financial concierge, which will free up their time to do what they do best."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "I spent my teens and early 20s in the streets fighting for the very women's rights that are now being eroded and erased. Never give up. Never surrender. Never let others set your limitations or boundaries."

Barbara Ocasio
EXECUTIVE VP OF OPERATIONS
Allison Portlock
EXECUTIVE VP OF MARKETING
Sound Royalties

Sound Royalties, which provides advances to artists, songwriters and even music companies based on their income streams, celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2024. "Over this past decade, we have built a company trusted by music creatives and the teams that support them, and it has been rewarding providing funding to thousands of music creatives worldwide to further support them in their musical journey," says Ocasio, who has been with the company since its founding. "I'm truly proud to be a part of a company that offers creative friendly financing, has developed a strong team and focuses on building professional relationships with the music industry at large."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Remind yourself of the importance or impact your work has on others," Ocasio says. "It will help keep you grounded."

Lylette Pizarro
FOUNDER/CO-MANAGING PARTNER
Lynn Hazan
CO-MANAGING PARTNER
Influence Media Partners

Along with their continued efforts in bolstering the images of their signed artistic partners — including producers and songwriters Oak Felder, Jason Evigan and RaiNao — Influence Media Partners spent 2024 expanding its business strategy through the launch of its label and publishing venture, SLANG. Boasting a roster including Will Smith, Camper and 30 Roc, IMP's new venture is already showing plenty of promise. "With each partnership," Pizarro says, "we work collaboratively with artists to determine how Influence Media can optimize our value — whether it be through brokering brand partnerships; leveraging name, image and likeness rights; or developing joint ventures to create career-defining cultural moments."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "When work is particularly stressful, I turn my focus to gratitude," Pizarro says. "I ground myself in the present and remind myself what all of the hard work is really about — creating a beautiful life for my family, friends and community."

Rights Groups

Jennifer Brown
CEO
SOCAN

In 2024, Canada's SOCAN shifted from "building custom technology" to "adopting third-party solutions for work that is common to all collectives," Brown says. This has helped the performing rights organization (PRO) be "more efficient with members' money" and allowed it to invest in the services and information that are most important in supporting creators. In its 2023 financial results, SOCAN reported record-high royalty distributions of $442 million Canadian ($307 million) to songwriters, composers and publishers. "By focusing on better rates and licensing efforts and delivering high-touch, high-impact service to songwriters, composers and publishers," she says, "we are a stronger piece of our great Canadian music industry working together to make sure that Canadian songs and stories continue to be told and find audiences."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "You were selected for a reason. Embrace your talents and perspective and be clear about how you want to get things done."

Andrea Czapary Martin
CEO
PRS for Music

Last year in the United Kingdom, PRS for Music broke the billion-pound barrier in terms of revenue while distributing a record-breaking 943.6 million pounds ($1.2 billion) in royalties, an increase of nearly 13% over 2023. It also reduced fees — by as much as 20% for multiterritory online licensing. That's "a real, tangible example of how we are constantly working on behalf of members to be competitive and to get more money to them more quickly," Czapary Martin says. "The success of the society should be defined by the success we pass on to songwriters and composers."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Focus on the positives, and work hard on the 20% that will drive the 80% of your impact. I always approach projects from a cup-half-full attitude and think about the assets, knowledge, expertise and experience I bring to the table."

The pioneering DORINDA CLARK-COLE of The Clark Sisters was honored at the 2024 BMI Trailblazers of Gospel Music Awards.

DEREK WHITE/GETTY IMAGES

Jamie Dominguez
NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRY RELATIONS
Mechanical Licensing Collective

In 2021, the U.S. Copyright Office tasked the MLC with managing the fragmented distribution of mechanical streaming royalties. Dominguez has played an important role in the MLC's distribution of over $2.7 billion in streaming royalties to songwriters and music publishers in just four years, helping grow the MLC's worldwide membership to 50,000. In the past year, the organization has hosted over 250 outreach events to educate and empower music creators around the world, with a focus on those in underserved and underrepresented communities. "We're committed to ensuring all creators have access to the tools and resources that will allow them to thrive and keep on creating great art," Dominguez says.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "Advocate for yourself. Whether you're a creator or a business professional, we're all making it up as we go along. There are no industry standards. Everything is negotiable."

Glenda Hart
VP OF SPECIAL PROJECTS
BMI

Overseeing nine annual BMI Awards shows with over 540 awards presented, Hart had her hands full in the past year. Highlights included BMI's Latin Awards honoring Horacio Palencia with the President's Award, Trailblazers of Gospel Music Awards tributes to Dorinda Clark-Cole and Jonathan McReynolds and the Pop Awards honoring Benny Blanco with the President's Award. At the R&B/Hip-Hop Awards, Babyface was named a BMI Icon and SZA was named the first genre BMI champion. The Country Awards honored Randy Owen of Alabama as a BMI Icon and featured performances by Riley Green, Luke Bryan and Blake Shelton, "which roused nearly 1,100 attendees to their feet," Hart says. "It was a special moment that I'll never forget."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "I believe that organization and planning are key in avoiding stressful situations."

CONGRATS

billboard Women in Music 2025

LINDSAY UNWIN
CEO | SALXCO

MELISSA MAHOOD
GENERAL MANAGER | XO

GABI MOSCI
HEAD OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
& INNOVATION | SALXCO

Congratulations Lindsay Unwin, Melissa Mahood, & Gabi Mosci for being included in Billboard's 2025 Women in Music!

FROM YOUR SALXCO | XO FAMILY

SALXCO

Elizabeth Matthews

CEO

ASCAP

"We stayed true to our creator-first mission by remaining laser-focused on closing deals that protect and grow licensing revenue for ASCAP members," Matthews says. In February, ASCAP reported that its 2024 revenue increased 5.7% to $1.8 billion while domestic royalties totaled $1.4 billion, up 5.3%. "We also moved quickly to provide relief to our members affected by the L.A. wildfires by establishing a $1 million ASCAP L.A. Fires Relief Fund," she says. "Our hearts go out to everyone in Los Angeles, and ASCAP will continue to use its collective strength to support the music community as the region recovers."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "My advice would be the same in good times and bad: Tune out the noise, continue to work hard, and listen to your intuition because it is likely your superpower."

Cristina Perpiñá-Robert

CEO

SGAE

Last year, the Spanish PRO set a new record, collecting about 390 million euros (over $401 million), thanks to strong gains in revenue from licensing for concerts, online services and international business. SGAE distributed about 360 million euros ($370.5 million), a 6% increase over 2023. Along with the implementation of monthly distributions for digital revenue, "it should return a lot of confidence to rights holders," says Perpiñá-Robert, who was charged with turning SGAE around after allegations of corruption reduced trust in the organization. SGAE also reached an agreement with Spain's two big private TV networks, elected a new board composed of 40% women and brought more technology to the process of registering works.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Beyond [running], I've learned to embrace laughter and maintain a sense of humor, even in the most high-pressure situations. Stress is inevitable, but keeping perspective helps."

Cécile Rap-Veber

CEO

SACEM

Under Rap-Veber, the French PRO keeps setting records, including one for distributions of 1.2 billion euros ($1.3 billion) for 2023, up 17% over the previous year. That same year, its cost ratio fell to 10.8% (a new low), and it now processes online royalties within three months. It also renewed its strategic alliance with ASCAP, announced the results of an AI study it funded with GEMA and earlier this year moved to an artist-centric royalty model with Deezer. "SACEM is not only defending the value of creation," Rap-Veber says, "but also actively supporting initiatives that promote cultural diversity, inclusion and artistic freedom."

CHARITY I SUPPORT "I support the Téléthon and Institut Raphaël in the fight against cancer because medical research is essential to ensuring that future generations don't have to suffer from these devastating diseases."

Ajula Singh

CFO/COO

SoundExchange

Already helping to guide an organization that handles more than $1 billion in annual royalty payments to 700,000 artists and rights holders, Singh continues to find new channels to help creators reap financial rewards for their work. In April, SoundExchange announced a partnership with JXBX (pronounced "jukebox") to process payments for participants in its creator program, which allows artists and songwriters to earn money for fan attention and engagement they draw to their pages on the platform. Advocating for creators' rights often leads to litigation. After suing SiriusXM in a claim for $150 million in unpaid royalties in 2023, SoundExchange filed a lawsuit in 2024 against AccuRadio for alleged years of nonpayment, claiming it has "directly harmed consumers."

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "Remember to laugh. Laughter is so important, so enjoyable and a great way to relieve stress."

Associations

Michele Ballantyne

PRESIDENT/COO

RIAA

As music creators contend with the threat and potential of AI, the RIAA remains committed to its advocacy through legislative efforts. In March, the Ensuring Likeness Voice and Image Security Act of 2024 — or the ELVIS Act — became law in Tennessee, expanding right-to-publicity protections to voice- and AI-related domains. The next goal? The NO FAKES Act, which has bipartisan support in the Senate, would create a federal intellectual property right to an individual's visual likeness and voice. "There is still work to be done educating policymakers," Ballantyne says, "pushing for legislation on transparency in AI training and convening peers across the creative community."

CHARITY I SUPPORT "I support and previously served on the advisory board of the Ron Brown Scholar Program because I believe in the power of opportunity and diverse voices to change the world and reflect all that are a part of it."

Nicole Barsalona

ARTIST MANAGER

Everyday Rebellion Entertainment

PRESIDENT

Women in Music

BOARD MEMBER

Music Managers Forum U.S.

ADVISORY BOARD

Moms in Music

The 40-year-old nonprofit Women in Music (which is not affiliated with *Billboard*'s Women in Music) is committed to advancing opportunities for women in the musical arts through its chapters worldwide. Barsalona highlights two recent initiatives: WIM Safe(r) Spaces and the WIM Workplace Initiative. "WIM Safe(r) Spaces provides resources and support for those facing harassment or assault, and the next phase of the program will entail a certificate program where companies and teams can complete training and other benchmarks necessary to be certified as a WIM Safe(r) Space. The WIM Workplace Initiative builds upon that — our survey in partnership with InHerSight collects data across priority metrics for women to name the WIM Best Places To Work in the music industry" (see story, page 102).

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT "You are not supposed to have all the answers. Keep going."

Lisa Hresko

GM

American Association of Independent Music

This year A2IM will celebrate its 20th year of providing advocacy, education and commerce opportunities for the independent music business. Last year, it was awarded the Department of Commerce's President's "E Star" Award for making a significant contribution to the expansion of U.S. exports. A2IM pushed vital legislation to protect creators' rights and distribution of royalties, including the HITS Act, the Protect Working Musicians Act, the No FAKES Act and the Preventing Abuse of Digital Replicas Act, and has also helped score critical wins in live ticketing, including a speculative ticketing ban, fair refund practices and transparent ticket price disclosure. As part of the Music First Coalition, A2IM is sparking conversations about closing loopholes that exempt terrestrial radio from paying royalties to artists and producers.

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS "I need to push back against productivity culture. I acknowledge that not every waking moment needs to fulfill an endless pursuit of productivity."

HarbourView Equity Partners is independently financing a slate of hip-hop biopics, starting with a film about QUEEN LATIFAH.

ERIC MCCANDLESS/DISNEY/GETTY IMAGES

CELEBRATING THE WOMEN WHO BRING MUSIC TO LIFE
THE GOLD STANDARD IN THE HEART OF LA
LOS ANGELES
LA
FOOTBALL CLUB
BMO STADIUM

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT

> “Tune out the noise, continue to work hard, and listen to your intuition because it is likely your superpower.”
>
> **—Elizabeth Matthews**, CEO, ASCAP

Tammy Hurt

CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Recording Academy

Hurt is most proud of the Recording Academy recently surpassing its stated goal of adding 2,500 more women voting members by 2025: It managed to add 3,000 of them by 2024. “This ensures that women will have a greater voice in shaping critical decisions,” she says. “It reflects our commitment to address gender disparities in an industry with gross underrepresentation and inequity. I am hopeful this progress will serve as an inspiration to young women aspiring to have a career in music, showing that their voices and talents matter and are being acknowledged.”

CHARITY I SUPPORT “In response to the recent wildfires in Los Angeles, the Recording Academy and MusiCares quickly mobilized to launch the Los Angeles Fire Relief Effort, pledging $1 million to support music community members affected by this devastating crisis.”

Sally Rose Larson

SENIOR VP OF GOVERNMENT AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Digital Media Association

In the last year, Larson has played a pivotal role in expanding DiMA’s footprint across North America. Originally a U.S.-focused organization, DiMA is now advocating for the world’s biggest streaming services in Canada as well. DiMA and its members’ efforts helped pause Canada’s so-called “streaming tax,” which would force streaming services to pay 5% of their annual Canadian revenue to funds that fuel Canadian content. Her efforts have also returned her to Capitol Hill to testify on behalf of member companies like Spotify, Apple Music and Amazon Music. “DiMA has been able to advance our members’ priorities, protect consumers’ ability to access music and work together with the creative community,” she says. Moving forward, DiMA will continue to support “a federal digital replica right to protect creators.”

TO DEAL WITH WORK STRESS “In terms of the day-to-day, prioritize prioritizing.”

Victoria Oakley

CEO

IFPI

Oakley, who was named head of the international music business association in April, started to face an intensifying debate over AI in June. The European Union Artificial Intelligence Act took effect last summer, and Oakley and her team have already begun to ensure it’s implemented in a way that will protect rights holders. Her goal is to help the industry embrace AI’s opportunities while making sure the right guardrails are in place so it develops in a sustainable way. “We are right at the start of this work,” Oakley says, “but it’s essential that we are having the right conversations with the right people about the solutions that we need to put in place.”

CHARITY I SUPPORT “The mental health charity Mind. It offers information and advice to people with mental health problems and lobbies government and local authorities on their behalf.”

Charlotte Sellmyer

SENIOR VP OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

National Music Publishers’ Association

When Spotify reclassified premium subscriptions as bundles due to the addition of audiobooks in March 2024, numerous music organizations protested a move that *Billboard* estimated would cost songwriters and publishers around $150 million in its first year. “Spotify’s audiobook ‘bundling’ scheme threatens to significantly slash what songwriters are paid by the streaming service,” Sellmyer says of the contentious issue. The NMPA has been leading the charge, waging a “multifront effort” to stop the streaming giant from “subverting the rules,” according to Sellmyer. “We continue that battle today.”

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT “You’ve got this. While there will always be challenges, there are so many avenues to excel in what interests you. It’s just a matter of finding what you’re passionate about and not letting anything stop you from going for it.”

Sarah Trahern

CEO

Country Music Association

The CMA made mental health initiatives a priority in the past year. Trahern points to the organization’s $600,000 investment to increase capacity for six key organizations focused on this issue, as well as programs such as the Women’s Leadership Academy and Touring Mentorship Program. “This funding demonstrates CMA’s commitment to addressing the demand for mental health resources in our business, whether that’s counseling, health care advocacy, financial guidance, substance abuse support, disaster relief or basic living needs,” she says. “From the wildfires in Los Angeles to the catastrophic flooding in parts of North Carolina and Tennessee, the past year has highlighted the ever-growing need for support in these areas.”

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, IN THIS MOMENT “I believe relationships are the cornerstone of any successful career. The connections you build within your community provide support, guidance and opportunities that can propel you forward in ways you can’t achieve alone.” b

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Methodology Nominations for *Billboard*’s industry-sourced executive lists open no less than 150 days in advance of publication, and a submission link is sent by request before the nomination period. (Please email thom.duffy@billboard.com for inclusion on the email list for nomination links and for how to obtain an editorial calendar.) *Billboard*’s 2025 Women in Music honorees were chosen by editors based on factors including the impact of honorees and their companies on consumer behavior, as measured by year-end *Billboard* charts, sales and streaming performance, market share, revenue or, where not available, *Billboard* revenue estimates, which may be aided by company guidance, social media impressions and radio audiences reached, using data available as of Dec. 31, 2024. Career trajectory and momentum were also considered. Where required, U.S. record-label market share was consulted using Luminate’s current market share for albums, plus track-equivalent and streaming-equivalent album consumption and *Billboard*’s quarterly top 10 publisher rankings. Companies whose nominees were chosen for the 2025 Women in Music list reflected the company choices made for the 2025 Power 100. Unless otherwise noted, Billboard Boxscore and Luminate are the sources for tour grosses and sales/streaming data, respectively. Luminate is also the source for radio audience metrics. The source for radio metrics is monitored station airplay from Mediabase provided by Luminate.

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BILLBOARD'S Latin WOMEN IN MUSIC 2025

Billboard launched Latin Women in Music — or Mujeres Latinas en la Música — in 2023 as a response to an exploding Latin music business that crossed borders and continents but was united in language and repertoire.

Revenue from Latin music, defined as music made predominantly in Spanish, went from just 5.6% of total recorded-music revenue in the United States in 2021 to nearly 8% by midyear 2024, according to the RIAA — a huge leap. Latin music is the fastest-growing genre in the country, according to the RIAA and Luminate, and for the third year in a row, Latin music revenue in the United States will exceed $1 billion.

Touring has exploded, too, with Latin outings accounting for 16% of 2024's top 100 touring grosses in the country, according to Billboard Boxscore. It's a significant increase from previous years.

Not surprisingly, the presence and impact of women in Latin music has also grown, to levels and positions unimaginable even a decade ago. Women now hold the most senior positions in every sector of the Latin music industry, from major labels to streaming services, and women managers helm the careers of some of the genre's most successful artists, including Shakira, Karol G and Anitta.

Understanding that Latin music is part of the industry as a whole, and yet holds its own distinct place within it by virtue of language and geography, *Billboard* has long shined a spotlight on Latin music and its executives. Our annual Billboard Latin Women in Music gala and executives list is part of that ongoing, expanding effort.

In 2025, for the first time since its inception in 2023, the Latin Women in Music executives list runs concurrently with the Women in Music executives list. As a result, both lists include different Latin industry leaders, reflecting a particularly broad and diverse marketplace that includes many countries. However, while the two lists share some companies, executives cannot be on both lists.

The Latin Women in Music list comprises only 45 executives whose purview is singularly Latin or Latin American-focused, whether they are based in the United States or abroad, and whose work has a significant impact on the U.S. Latin market. On April 24, the Mujeres Latinas en la Música gala will again air on the Telemundo network, honoring remarkable artists who have made an impact in the past year and beyond. We are proud to continue supporting the growth and accomplishments of women in Latin music.

—LEILA COBO

Warner Music Latina breakout artist and singer-songwriter **Elena Rose** had multiple hits in 2024. They include "Orion," alongside Sony Music Central America artist Boza; "Pa' Qué Volviste?," with Maria Becerra; and "Caracas en el 2000" with Danny Ocean and Jerry Di.

Labels, Publishers & Distributors

Mariana Briceño
Vp of creative
UNIVERSAL MUSIC LATINO

Briceño's mission is "to bring artists' visions to life through compelling narratives and innovative marketing strategies that don't just promote music but create cultural moments." The executive is particularly proud of the release campaign she led for *al romper la burbuja*, the debut album by Joaquina, who won a Latin Grammy for best new artist in 2023. The creative strategy behind the project, Briceño says, "redefined how Latin pop is introduced in today's digital landscape, leveraging an integrated cross-platform approach" that included the album being featured on the cover of 37 Spotify playlists. Briceño also helped Colombian newcomers TIMØ get placed on over 25 playlists across platforms, demonstrating the effectiveness of data-driven and artist-centric storytelling in today's music landscape.

Amelia Cueva
CEO
A & I MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

The Los Angeles-based indie music publisher represents some of the biggest hit-makers in *música mexicana* today, including Christian Nodal, Luciano Luna and emerging singer-songwriter Netón Vega. The lattermost scored his first entry on the Billboard Hot 100 thanks to "Si No Quieres No" (with Luis R Conriquez) and was included in *Billboard*'s Latin Artists To Watch in 2025. Named indie publisher of the year by the Association of Independent Music Publishers in 2024, the company also handles business management for clients like Nodal, Calibre 50 and Banda Carnaval, to name a few. "It's a very exciting time for young women to get involved in the music business," Cueva says. "There are more positive female role models that they can look up to than when I started 23 years ago."

Ana Martínez
GM
FONOVISA-DISA U.S.

As the first woman to lead the regional Mexican music label in the United States, Martínez spearheaded initiatives that led to substantial market-share growth and propelled top-charting performances from icons Alejandro Fernández, Los Tigres del Norte and La Arrolladora Banda El Limón on *Billboard*'s Regional Mexican Airplay chart. Martínez also implemented strategic initiatives for acts like Banda El Recodo, Adriel Favela and Chiquis. "These accomplishments reflect our commitment to advancing our label's vision and impacting the industry," says Martínez, who is particularly excited to see younger generations being bold and "taking pride in their roots and culture and showcasing them to the world."

"I'm excited to see the resurgence of pop music in Latin America. After years of urban and reggaetón dominating the charts, we are witnessing a new wave of Latin pop artists redefining the genre with fresh sounds, genre-bending influences and deeper storytelling."

—MARIANA BRICEÑO

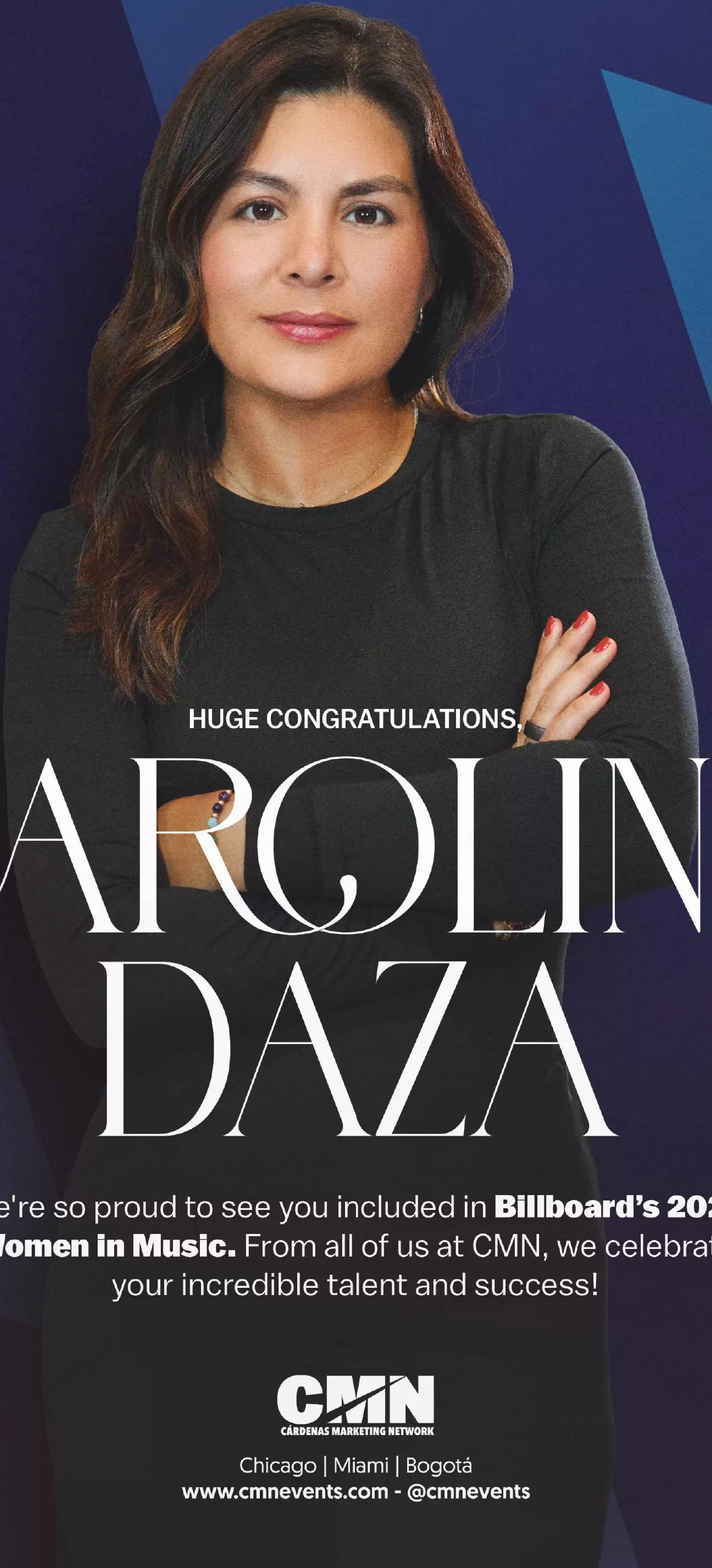
Marcela Moreira
Vp of marketing, Latin America
WARNER MUSIC

"Aligning marketing strategies across the region to drive global impact in high-growth domestic markets has been crucial to our success," Moreira says, citing the success of Danny Ocean's "Imagínate," alongside Kapo, which climbed to No. 1 on the Latin Pop Airplay chart. That approach also boosted Argentine Yami Safdie's burgeoning career with her hit "En Otra Vida" and follow-up "Querida Yo," alongside superstar and Sony Music Latin artist Camilo. Other Warner female artists are having their moment, from Maria Becerra becoming the first Argentine female artist to sell out Buenos Aires' River Plate Stadium to Elena Rose's viral hits like "Caracas en el 2000."

Azu Olvera
GM
WK RECORDS
Head of music
WK ENTERTAINMENT

New to her role at WK Records after serving as senior director of Latin industry and artist relations at SiriusXM, Olvera is looking forward to "blending strategy with artistry" as she takes over the helm of the indie label. She sees great potential for innovation at WK, whose roster includes Ryan Castro, Los Esquivel, Alex Rose, Daaz and Maisak (in partnership with Royalty Records), and plans to "push boundaries; champion bold, diverse sounds; create fresh opportunities; and help set new standards in the industry." Early actions include restructuring the label by building a new A&R and marketing team, rebranding and relaunching WK Records and expanding the roster with new signings and strategic deals, while also prioritizing rising regional Mexican stars like Los Esquivel.

ROSE: MARY BETH KOETH. BRICEÑO: COURTESY OF MARIANA BRICEÑO.



HUGE CONGRATULATIONS,

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Karina Puente
Vp of promotion
SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT, U.S. LATIN

Sony Music Latin ended 2024 as the leading Latin airplay label in nearly all categories — Hot Latin Songs, Latin Airplay, Latin Pop Airplay, Tropical Airplay and Latin Rhythm Airplay — with the help of Puente's strategic leadership. Rauw Alejandro's *Cosa Nuestra* broke records with the biggest streaming week of 2024 and landed at No. 1 on Top Latin Albums and Latin Rhythm Albums. Shakira's *Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran* clinched the top spots on Top Latin Albums and Latin Pop Albums. Breakout stars Óscar Maydon and Kapo had strong performances on Hot Latin Songs and Latin Rhythm Airplay, respectively, among other chart achievements. "These accomplishments highlight Sony Music's commitment to supporting and amplifying the voices of leading Latin artists," Puente says.

Ana Rosa Santiago
Senior vp of Latin music, publishing
UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING GROUP

Santiago has embraced UMPG's efforts in fostering a global community that can create global hits that "mesh and fuse unique sounds from different territories." With that purpose in mind, the company hosted global workshops that brought together Latin songwriters from many rosters to produce hits that have been heard around the world, according to Santiago. Her commitment extends to supporting initiatives like She Is the Music and Women in Music, which empower and create essential networking opportunities for women in the industry.

Jennifer Sarkissian
GM
NACIONAL RECORDS/LATIN ALTERNATIVE MUSIC CONFERENCE

Trueno's first Latin Grammy win for best urban fusion/performance with "Tranky Funky" last year was "satisfying" for Sarkissian, who's part of his management team. The Argentine rapper is managed by Magnus Talent Agency, which partnered with Nacional Records. Sarkissian also continues to elevate Latin alternative music, most notably through the annual Latin Alternative Music Conference. Last year's in-person edition, with guests like Residente and Fonseca, gathered the largest turnout to date. "Both are a testament to the health of our industry and the importance of getting together to exchange knowledge, ideas and support each other," says Sarkissian, who has grown with the industry. "Some of my most valued relationships are the female friendships that formed when I just started out."

Third Annual Special Airs April 24 On Telemundo

billboard
MUJERES
LATINAS
EN LA MÚSICA

The *Billboard Latin Women in Music* special returns for its third consecutive year to the Telemundo network, broadcasting live April 24 and streaming on Peacock.

The 2025 gala will once again celebrate Latin female artists who have had meaningful impact on Latin music and the *Billboard* charts in the past year, featuring appearances and performances from some of the top names in the world from the intimate setting of the state-of-the-art Telemundo Center in Miami.

Latin Women in Music, or Mujeres Latinas en la Música, launched in 2023 as an expansion of *Billboard's* Women in Music franchise and in response to a Latin music market growing with unprecedented speed and strength. Both the upcoming gala and the executives list in this issue of *Billboard* celebrate women making an impact on Latin music through their artistic achievements or through noteworthy actions that have brought measurable recognition and opportunity to women, effecting positive change to the industry as a whole.

"We are happy to bring audiences the third installment of the *Billboard Latin Women in Music* special as part of our continued partnership with *Billboard* to celebrate the incredible talent and achievements of Latin female artists in the music industry," says Francisco "Cisco" Suárez, executive vp of primetime unscripted and specials at Telemundo. "We are honored to shine a spotlight on these inspiring women who continue to break barriers and shape the future of music with their artistry, passion and dedication."

"Our Latin Women in Music gala is a bold and inspiring event, and our continued commitment to this franchise underscores our commitment to Latin music and Latin women in music," says Leila Cobo, *Billboard*'s chief content officer for Latin/Español.

The inaugural Latin Women in Music edition honored Shakira as Woman of the Year and also feted Thalia, Ana Gabriel, Evaluna, Goyo, Maria Becerra and Emilia. The 2024 edition named Karol G as Woman of the Year and also gave awards to Gloria Estefan, Ana Bárbara, La India, Kali Uchis, Camila Cabello, Kany García and Ángela Aguilar.

The 2024 broadcast was the most-watched show on Spanish-language TV in its 9 p.m.-to-11 p.m. time slot, according to Nielsen, and delivered record-breaking engagement, garnering 61 million engagements across the Telemundo and Peacock platforms. Honorees for the 2025 event will once again reflect the diversity of Latin women in music, spanning genres and generations.

Billboard Latin Women in Music *will broadcast live on Telemundo and stream on Peacock on April 24 from 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. ET from Telemundo Center.*

Natti Natasha released her long-awaited *bachata* album, *Natti Natasha en Amargue,* on Sony Music Latin. Her fourth studio set was written and produced by bachata king Romeo Santos, a noteworthy seal of approval.

JODIE JONES

AIDA

Your passion and dedication
have paved the way for Latinas
in the industry.

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Tu Familia,

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RECORDING
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Management & Consulting

Veronica Vaccarezza
Senior vp of business development, Latin America and U.S. Latin
SONY MUSIC PUBLISHING

SMP was the top publisher on *Billboard*'s year-end 2024 Hot Latin Songs Publishing Corporation chart, an achievement that "is simply a reflection of the incredibly talented and versatile songwriters that are part of our SMP Latin family across all genres," Vaccarezza says. SMP's roster of hit-makers in 2024 included Shakira, Maluma and Edgar Barrera, and it recently signed Fuerza Regida frontman Jesús "JOP" Ortiz Paz and Street Mob Records, JOP's leading indie label focused on música mexicana, the fastest-growing genre in the U.S. Latin market. Vaccarezza is also excited that Latin artists are using their platforms "to take a stand about the causes they care about and still make chart-topping smash hits in the process."

Marcela Vaccari
Senior vp of commercial services
WARNER MUSIC LATIN AMERICA & U.S. LATIN

Vaccari has played an integral role in spearheading the growth of Warner's commercial department, making huge strides in expanding brand partnerships regionwide. A key example was a partnership with Mastercard to launch the song "Pa' Qué Volviste?" by Maria Becerra and Elena Rose. Vaccari has also supported releases by Myke Towers, Danny Ocean and Blessd, who have all had international success. At a local level, Matuê in Brazil, Fran C in Chile, Belinda in Mexico and Yami Safdie in Argentina have been a testament to the tailored approach Warner is taking to connect with diverse audiences across Latin America. Vaccari's advice to younger women? "It may sound simple, but authenticity is truly the key to long-term success."

> "Salsa, bachata and merengue are back in a big way, but not as we knew them. Artists are infusing these classic rhythms with pop, urban and electronic influences, creating a fresh and exciting sound."
> —KARINA PUENTE

Pamela Cornejo
Manager
COZARA MUSE

As sister and manager of música mexicana star Ivan Cornejo, Pamela has been instrumental to her sibling's "growing journey." Over the past year, Ivan has crossed off "long-dreamed" achievements on his bucket list, including an NPR *Tiny Desk* performance and his show at the Houston Rodeo, where he sang before a crowd of 70,000. Over the summer, he scored his first No. 1 on Top Latin Albums with *Mirada*, his third studio set. The 20-year-old Mexican American hit-maker is set to kick off the second part of his *Mirada* tour in April. "I'm very excited and proud to see the growth and recognition Mexican music is receiving right now," Pamela says, "from mariachi to *corridos tumbados*, *banda* and everything in between."

Nadine Eliya
CEO
SHAKENT
Manager
SHAKIRA

Eliya steered Shakira's groundbreaking *Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran* cycle, including its singles, album and recently launched stadium run, which Eliya calls "one of the most rewarding challenges of my career. Putting together a show with Shakira is one of the most rigorous and formative as a creative professional because she's such a 360 artist that demands excellence on every level, but this is the most ambitious one we've done yet." The sales and creative execution of the tour "has prepared me for any challenge that could come my way." Eliya also recently joined the board of Shakira's Pies Descalazos Foundation, "my passion for as long as I've worked by her side. There's nothing more satisfying than being a part of creating those spaces for kids in Colombia."

Sony Music artist and global superstar **Shakira** had an extraordinary comeback year, releasing *Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran,* which debuted at No. 1 on *Billboard*'s Top Latin Albums chart, tied the all-time record for the most No. 1s on *Billboard*'s Latin Pop Airplay chart and became the first woman with a No. 1 in four different decades on Top Latin Albums.

Shakira Kalité
Artist management
GOOD GRIEF

Over the past year, Kali Uchis, an already established talent in the American R&B-pop scene, made significant strides as a Spanish-language artist in the United States. Under Kalité's management, Uchis' 2024 album, *Orquídeas*, not only showcased her artistic growth but also achieved remarkable commercial success, debuting at No. 2 on the all-genre Billboard 200 (a rare high for a Spanish-language set) and Uchis' most successful album to date. "Having the No. 2 album in America for a Latin record was a major achievement. I am so proud of Kali and her hard work," Kalité says. Uchis' singles also peaked, with "Igual Que Un Ángel" (featuring Peso Pluma) topping the Hot Latin Songs chart and reaching No. 22 on the Hot 100.

Rebeca León
Founder/CEO
LIONFISH ENTERTAINMENT

Danny Ocean and Anitta — both managed by León — had No. 1 hits on the *Billboard* charts in 2024, with the former achieving a No. 1 on Latin Airplay and Latin Pop Airplay with "Amor" in June. The latter became the first Brazilian artist to reach No. 1 on the Regional Mexican Airplay chart with "La Tóxica," in collaboration with Alejandro Fernández. In addition to managing rising Spanish act st. Pedro and Venezuelan reggaetón LGBTQ+ artist La Cruz, León partnered with Pharrell Williams and Live Nation to launch the Latin boy band DND (Do Not Disturb). "We created something explosive, and it has been very rewarding to see them grow," she says of the group that earned its first Premio Lo Nuestro nomination this year.

Mariana López Crespo
Co-founder
1K DOJO

Young Miko is hardly an overnight success. Since 2018, the Puerto Rican hit-maker has been working side by side with her manager, López Crespo (who is also her best friend), a key figure in the 27-year-old artist's rapidly ascending career. Last year, Miko — who opened for Karol G's stadium tour in 2023 — made her Coachella debut and delivered her Grammy-nominated debut album, *att.*, which became her first entry on the Billboard 200. In September, she wrapped her 24-date XOXO Tour, her biggest U.S. trek yet. Miko closed 2024 at No. 5 on *Billboard*'s year-end Top Latin Artists — Female chart.

SHAKIRA: NICOLAS GERARDIN. PUENTE: RUBEN MARTIN.

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Ana Christina Ordóñez

Vp

MAGNUS

The last 12 months for Ordóñez, who manages a roster of seven entertainment industry figures, included over 100 concerts in Latin America, North America and Europe; more than 30 award nominations; 18 single releases; and four albums. Standouts include managing Bacilos' Pequeños Romances Tour — that played over 40 cities with sold-out shows in Spain, Mexico and the Dominican Republic and continues this year — to leading projects like Fonseca's latest album, *Tropicalia*, which won two Latin Grammys (including best contemporary tropical album) and led to a tour that started with a sold-out show in Madrid and will continue in Latin America, the United States and Europe.

Luana Pagani

Founder/president

FAIRWINDS ENTERTAINMENT

As a consultant, Pagani worked in multiple projects in the past year, including for two artists that had major breakthroughs in the U.S. Latin market. Yuridia achieved her first No. 1 on the Regional Mexican Airplay chart with "Mi Eterno Amor Secreto," alongside Eden Muñoz; received two nominations for Premio Lo Nuestro; and sold out the first leg of her *Sin Llorar* U.S. tour. Niña Pastori won a Latin Grammy for her album *Raíz Nunca Me Fui*, a multicultural folk project with Lila Downs and Soledad. On the business side, Pagani has forged an alliance with DG Experiences to develop theater and music projects in the United States to kick off the second half of 2025 and continues to serve on the advisory committee of the Latin Grammy Foundation. "I'm excited and proud of their programs, which create opportunities and support for young musicians and future executives," she says.

Anaid Quijada

Vp of marketing and new business (Carlos Vives)

WK ENTERTAINMENT

Carlos Vives was the 2024 Latin Recording Academy's Person of the Year, "the biggest honor a [Latin] music artist can accomplish," says Quijada, who oversees Vives' business within his management company, WK Entertainment. Vives also took his *El Rock de Mi Pueblo* tour through Latin America and Spain and collaborated with Carín León, Chimbala, Luis Fonsi and Silvestre Dangond. "His ability to remain relevant for over 30 years in an ever-evolving industry is a testament to his artistic integrity and the power of strong, strategic management," Quijada adds, noting that the Colombian artist's resurgence occurred when he began working with manager Walter Kolm almost 13 years ago. Quijada also supports Tras la Perla, the Vives foundation that focuses on the sustainable development of his home city, Santa Marta, and its surrounding region.

Diana Rodríguez

CEO

CRITERIA ENTERTAINMENT

Criteria is celebrating its 14th year as an independent management and creative company, launching Chilean star Mon Laferte's "ambitious" 85-date tour and signing her to a new record deal with Sony. In the past 12 months, Criteria also signed singer-songwriter Linda Perry for Latin collaborations, added rising star Oscar Ortiz as the first música mexicana artist on its roster and renewed long-term marketing and publicity agreements with BMG Latin America in Mexico. Rodríguez encourages young executives to embrace disruption and take risks. The Los Angeles resident supports California Fire Relief and initiatives like Ruidosa (led by management client Francisca Valenzuela) and EquilizHER, which "support parity and equity for women and all female-identified voices."

"Be resilient, take care of yourself and your mental health, connect with a strong network of women, find mentors and together, let's continue pushing for representation, [being uplifted] and respect in the industry."

—TANIA DORANTES

Regional Mexican music star **Ana Bárbara** continued breaking ground for women in her genre. The artist, who is managed by Rosela Zavala, signed a publishing deal with Kobalt, received a Lifetime Achievement award at the *Billboard* Latin Women in Music gala and sold out her U.S. and Mexico Reina Grupera Tour.

July Ugarte

Head of management

DALE PLAY

It was a year of major milestones for the Dale Play roster, including a fourth Latin Grammy win for Bizarrap, who nabbed the inaugural best Latin electronic music performance award for "Shakira: Bzrp Music Sessions, Vol. 53 (Tiësto Remix)," and Nicki Nicole played over 40 shows on her *Alma* tour. While Dale Play artists Rels B, Milo J, Lali and Vélez conquered their own sold-out stadium spectacles last year, Duki made history as the first Argentine artist to perform at Santiago Bernabéu Stadium in Madrid, prior to beginning his first-ever U.S. tour in April. "Every achievement reinforces our mission: to empower our artists so their music transcends borders," Ugarte says.

Patty Vega

Director/artist manager

CHAF ENTERPRISES

After a five-year absence, Vega's client Chayanne returned to touring in grand fashion. The Puerto Rican superstar just finished a 39-date arena tour of the United States; on March 20, he will start a stint of more than 20 Latin American dates, many of them in stadiums, before heading out to play arenas in Spain. Already, Vega says, 80% of the shows are sold out. "It is extremely rewarding to see that after so many years in the industry he is still an icon, loved by the people and even growing in popularity," she adds. Beyond Chayanne, Vega sees a future in *cumbia*. "It's a very popular genre," she says, "that is appealing to more and more people all over Latin America."

Rosela Zavala

CEO

EDIM TALENT

Manager

ANA BÁRBARA

Zavala's client Ana Bárbara celebrated her 30th anniversary in music with a bang, signing a global publishing deal with Kobalt, being recognized with a lifetime achievement award at the Billboard Latin Women in Music gala and selling out her Reina Grupera Tour. Now Ana Bárbara is gearing up for a second leg that includes her first European trek. The Mexican star also notched a 400% increase in monthly listeners on Spotify alone, Zavala says, and will be a judge on a major reality TV show. "The growth Ana Bárbara has experienced in every aspect — musically, professionally and personally — has been incredible, and I couldn't be prouder to be part of this journey," Zavala says. "It reflects not only the timelessness of her music but also her ability to connect with new generations."

BÁRBARA: ORLANDO NARANJO AND HECTOR MOLINA. DORANTES: NATHAN WEST.

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Platforms, Technology & Media

Samantha Aanerud
Label partnerships lead, U.S. Latin
SPOTIFY

Aanerud has focused on expanding opportunities for Latin artists and enhancing fan connections through innovative partnerships. Of note is La Tierra de la Música Mexicana, an initiative that highlights the diversity of Mexican music in the United States by showcasing emerging artists and strengthening ties between Los Angeles and Mexico. Likewise, major releases like Bad Bunny's afford an opportunity "to create culturally significant activations. Seeing this momentum translate into higher engagement, increased streaming and a stronger presence in the industry reinforces why this work matters." Looking ahead to 2025, she is excited about experimentation in Latin music, the resurgence of tropical sounds (especially salsa) and the rise of Afrobeat Latino.

Krystina DeLuna
Editorial, head of música mexicana and pop, Latino
APPLE MUSIC

In December, Apple Music unveiled its first global radio station of Latin music with exclusive shows hosted by stars Rauw Alejandro, Becky G and Grupo Frontera. Apple Música Uno launched as a 24/7, ad-free platform curated by "true music lovers," featuring radio programs that are "shaped by the artists themselves," DeLuna says. Now Apple Música Uno serves as a hub exclusively for all things Latin, covering every spectrum of the genre from reggaetón to pop to Mexican. "It's important to us to continue creating spaces for artists in their own voice and language," she adds, noting that she hopes artists from other genres will follow the footsteps of música mexicana artists who took traditional styles they grew up with "and made [them] their own."

Tania Dorantes
Strategic partner manager, Latin America
META

From album campaigns for Latin superstars Shakira and Rauw Alejandro to hosting over 90 artists at the Casa Meta during the 2024 Latin Grammys in Miami, Dorantes worked on "a number of impactful projects" over the past year. That included hosting the Plus edition of Meta Loves Music — Meta's educational program — for the first time in Latin America. Plus' foray into the market began in Mexico and included artist, creator and fan custom activations, as well as a panel discussion with artists Vivir Quintana, Zemmoa, Camila Fernández and Daniela Spalla, who shared inspiring music and stories. Meta has also mixed social impact with music, including a beach cleanup tied to Shakira and Manuel Turizo's "Copa Vacía."

Manuela Ferradas
Senior manager of Latin talent and industry relations
SIRIUSXM

Newly appointed to her post in January, Ferradas hopes to position SiriusXM as "top of mind for the Latin community," expanding beyond music. To do so, the focus is on big actions, like the recent SiriusXM and Pandora concert in Las Vegas during F1 featuring J Balvin, and expanding use of the company's Miami studios, where recent guests include Carlos Rivera, Aitana, Guaynaa, FloyyMenor and Ela Taubert. Additionally, "we have secured A-level talent for our flagship Latin show, *El Pulso*, in June. More to come on that," Ferradas says. When it comes to advice for young female artists, she says, "We need to start slowing down and focusing on quality over quantity, making sure we are intentional about everything we're doing."

Karol G's *Mañana Será Bonito* tour became the highest-grossing Latin tour by a woman in Billboard Boxscore history, grossing over $313 million. Her hit single "Si Antes Te Hubiera Conocido" also broke the records for weeks at No. 1 (31) on the Tropical Airplay chart.

"The Afrobeat Latino movement is proving to be a powerful force, and the fusion of electronic music with Latin and música mexicana is pushing regional sounds into bold and uncharted territory."
—SAMANTHA AANERUD

Rocío Guerrero
Head of music, Latin-Iberia
AMAZON MUSIC

From developments in the livestream space to offering exclusive merchandise deals at shows for superstars Peso Pluma and Feid, Guerrero has had a hand in many noteworthy endeavors. Among them is livestreaming from well-known festivals like Vive Latino in Mexico to Primavera Sound in Spain and the release of *Gen Mex: Your Generation of Música Mexicana*, a "deep-dive documentary" about the rise and evolution of the genre, featuring exclusive songs by Xavi, Eden Muñoz and others. Amazon also supports initiatives like Wonder Women of Latin Music at the Latin Alternative Music Conference, and last year, it sponsored the Latin Recording Academy's Leading Ladies of Entertainment. "Championing women in this industry is always a highlight for me," Guerrero says.

Mia Nygren
GM, Latin America
SPOTIFY

Spotify paid a record $10 billion to music rights holders in 2024, according to the streaming service, which also reported that it has contributed nearly $60 billion to the music industry since its founding. "We're very proud to have demonstrated what we've been saying over the past year: Spotify is not just a great product but well on its way to becoming a great, profitable, scalable business," says Nygren, who oversees the company's business in Latin America. Spotify has had "tremendous" growth across markets where Latin music is created and listened to, "which means more money flowing into the Latin music industry," she adds.

KAROL G: RYZE. AANERUD: ALESSANDRO MARTINO.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR VERY OWN

CHRISSY HALL

DIRECTOR OF CONCERTS | RYMAN AUDITORIUM AND GRAND OLE OPRY HOUSE

FOR KING + COUNTRY
DRUMMER BOY CHRISTMAS
AMY GRANT
VINCE GILL
OLD DOMINION

ONE OF BILLBOARD'S 2025 WOMEN IN MUSIC

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CONGRATS!

TO OUR PRESIDENT
OF SBS ENTERTAINMENT
ALESSANDRA ALARCÓN
AND TO ALL
BILLBOARD'S
WOMEN IN MUSIC
HONOREES!

SBS ENTERTAINMENT sbs la musica

SPANISH BROADCASTING SYSTEM

Live & Agencies

Diana Dotel
Co-founder
MTW AGENCY
Founder
MTW LIVE

Dotel proudly runs a primarily female-led marketing agency, bringing major global brands into the world of music, "especially Latin music," and, last year, bringing several of those brands into Mexican music for the first time. Dotel helmed partnerships for Cash App with Carín León and Edgar Barrera and for Patron with Becky G, Gabito Ballesteros and Tito Double P, marking the first time the latter two artists "ever worked with a brand." In the general market, she created partnerships between Bacardí and Camila Cabello for a global TV commercial and worked with Nicki Minaj on the creation and launch of Minaj's Pink Friday Nails. Dotel also created Mujeres Del Movimiento, which showcases Latin women in music beyond live shows.

Dania Echeverri
Vp of cross-cultural marketing and brand consulting
CAA

Echeverri established a cross-cultural marketing team at CAA to better serve clients at the intersection of brands, culture and diverse audiences. A highlight is the development and execution of Corona's recent partnership with global superstar Peso Pluma, which included exclusive digital content, innovative stage integrations and NFL broadcast touchpoints. Echeverri sees this as an extraordinary time for Latin music and encourages younger women to champion their legacies and create space for others. "Women before us have shattered glass ceilings, paving the way for Latinas everywhere. Our goal shouldn't be to be 'the first Latina woman to do it' anymore. We should be creating multiple seats at the table."

Kemelly Figueroa-Mouriz
Vp of entertainment experiences
LOUD AND LIVE

Loud And Live expanded its entertainment agency and brand partnerships business through multiple high-profile brand deals, including partnering with Young Miko, Camilo and Jay Wheeler for McDonald's, as well as the highly anticipated launch of New Balance's latest partnership with Eladio Carrión. But one of the most significant accomplishments for Loud And Live was its Latin Grammy win for best recording package for *Celia Cruz en Vivo: 100 Años de Azúcar*. "Winning a Latin Grammy in her name was an incredibly special and meaningful moment for me and a testament to the enduring impact of her artistry," Figueroa-Mouriz says. "*¡Azúcar!*"

This year marks the centennial of Celia Cruz's birth, but celebrations began in 2024 with the releases of a commemorative quarter and of *Celia Cruz en Vivo: 100 Años de Azúcar*. Released by Loud And Live, the album of a previously unreleased live performance packaged with a book of rare photos won a Latin Grammy for best recording package.

Fabi Kulick
Head of Latin tour marketing
LIVE NATION

Live Nation promoted Karol G's record-breaking stadium tour, which became the biggest European outing last year by a Latin artist thanks to a massive collaborative effort between Karol's team and several Live Nation divisions, including global touring, PR and the marketing team Kulick oversees. "Together, we played a part in Karol G making history as the first Latin female artist to complete a global stadium tour," she says, noting that the Colombian star also became the first female artist to sell out four nights at Santiago Bernabéu Stadium in Madrid (and the first to sell out four stadium shows in Spain). "I'm excited to see more Latin artists tour globally," says Kulick, who is also working on upcoming global tours for Feid and Rauw Alejandro.

Thanya Román Valdez
Brand partnerships agent
WME

Román Valdez is particularly proud of campaigns for WME clients Alvaro Díaz and Natti Natasha. The first partnered with Espolòn Tequila to launch his own sneaker and merch collaboration, which debuted at ComplexCon. "Seeing his art and dreams come to life was unforgettable," she says. The second was Natasha's new, broad partnership with T-Mobile, which "gave her visibility far beyond Latin outlets, showing a face that represents our culture to a general-market audience." For 2025, Román Valdez is excited about "the reimagination of classic songs from genres like salsa, cumbia and boleros. It's taking us back to the roots of Latin music while introducing these timeless sounds to new generations."

JAMES STYLE

Societies & Organizations

Gabriela González
Senior vp of Latin membership and international affairs
ASCAP

Gonzalez says the ASCAP team is again on track to achieve record-breaking revenue and distributions for its members in 2024. She emphasizes the team's work to benefit songwriters and publishers, highlighting the importance of ensuring members receive nearly 90 cents for every dollar collected on their behalf. The ASCAP Latin team also provided exciting new opportunities for members, including the first Latin She Runs the Boards song camp in Miami. "We are assisting with a similar camp to take place in Mexico this year," González says, also noting that "incredible" talent joined its Latin roster in the past year, including Nabález, PJ Sin Suela, Mozart La Para, Giulia Be, Teo Bok and Adolfo Ángel Alba.

Adriana Restrepo
Regional director, Latin America and Caribbean
IFPI

Restrepo is happy to see that in 2024, for a 15th consecutive year, the Latin America region sustained double-digit growth. "It is not a minor detail," Restrepo says, adding, "This great success is largely due to the immense richness of Latin music and the investment by record companies and their capacity to maintain an entrepreneurial approach to discover new talents and develop opportunities for their artists." In addition, Restrepo highlights the performance of the rights licensing business, which also ended the year with sustained double-digit growth despite facing headwinds caused by economic instability in some markets. Looking ahead, Restrepo is "excited to listen to great new salsa songs. I come from Colombia, a country where salsa is part of the music culture DNA."

WE ARE PROUD TO CELEBRATE

ASHLEY CALHOUN
ANNIE ABERLE
SARA AHMED

FOR THEIR INCLUSION ON BILLBOARD'S
WOMEN IN MUSIC 2024: TOP EXECUTIVES

PULSE
MUSIC GROUP

Billboard 2025
Latin Woman Music
EXECUTIVE HONOREE

CONGRATULATIONS
SANDRA GARCÍA-SANJUÁN

STARLITE
GROUP

La magia
existe
STARLITE

Chiquis scored her second Grammy nomination in the best música mexicana album category with *Diamantes*, becoming the only woman nominated for the award in 2024. The bilingual star also scored her 11th hit on the Regional Mexican Airplay chart with "Que Siga Pasando."

Aida Scorza
Senior vp of awards
LATIN RECORDING ACADEMY

In 2024, two categories were introduced at the Latin Grammys: best Latin electronic music performance and best contemporary Mexican music album. "We were able to reach out to both communities, including record labels, to make them aware of the new categories. By the end of the process, I was glad to see that both categories finished with a very healthy number of entries," says Scorza, who has worked at the Latin Academy for over 30 years. Looking to 2025, she sees a trend in regional Mexican artists collaborating with urban acts, as was the case with last year's team-up between Peso Pluma and Snoop Dogg, and is excited that young Latin producers and songwriters are emerging within the industry.

Celeste Zendejas
Senior vp
SESAC LATINA

Zendejas' good eye has served her well. In 2019, she signed Colombian Kapo, who in the last year quickly ascended to global success with his hit "Ohnana," which held at No. 1 on the Latin Rhythm Airplay chart for 11 weeks. Yahir Saldívar, another rising singer-songwriter, had a viral sensation with "SC-9," which amassed over 224 million YouTube views. Zendejas also underscores SESAC Latina's commitment to education through the Music 101 event, held in partnership with YouTube in 2024. Encouraging young women in music, she advises them to "seek mentors, attend events and be bold, determined and disciplined." If opportunities aren't readily available, she urges them to "go out and create" their own paths.

International

Mariela Croci
Founder
THE SELLO

Croci's company in Argentina provides everything from digital marketing to overall release strategy. In the past year, projects included Emilia's *.mp3* album launch and her Argentina tour, which included 10 sold-out shows at Movistar Arena and four dates at Estadio Vélez in Buenos Aires last year; up-and-coming Argentine rock band Conociendo Rusia, which sold out two shows at Movistar Arena and won a Latin Grammy for best pop rock song; and strategy for Mexican artists Carlos Rivera and Reik's sold-out Movistar Arena dates. A "major achievement" is Croci's The Good School, a mentoring program for new artists that provides in-depth programs in everything from A&R to creating a strategic career plan. "We've already had 26 artists," Croci says. "It's something truly fulfilling."

Melissa Exposito
President, Central America and the Caribbean
SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

For Exposito, "there's more room than ever before for new voices and perspectives." She's "exceptionally proud" of the company's achievements in artist development, such as Panamanian singer-songwriter Boza, who in 2024 had a major hit, "Orion," in collaboration with Elena Rose. The Afrobeats tune peaked at No. 2 on the Latin Pop Airplay chart, where it spent eight weeks. Additionally, the label broke Argentine rapper Trueno and viral Colombian newcomer Kapo in Central America and the Caribbean region. The former won his first Latin Grammy in 2024, and the latter had two concurrent hits on the *Billboard* charts, "Ohnana" and "UWAIE." All told, SME's content share in the region's Spotify Top 100 grew nearly three points in the past year.

"Latin music is experiencing its biggest moment in history, reaching more audiences and cultures than ever before. With that growth, we've also seen more industry support for Latin women to succeed and grow into top executive positions."

—FABI KULICK

CHIQUIS: DAVID CABRERA. KULICK: ANABELLA PADULA.

billboard
LATIN
NEWSLETTERS

GET EXPERT INSIGHT ON THE LATIN MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT SECTORS — STRAIGHT TO YOUR INBOX

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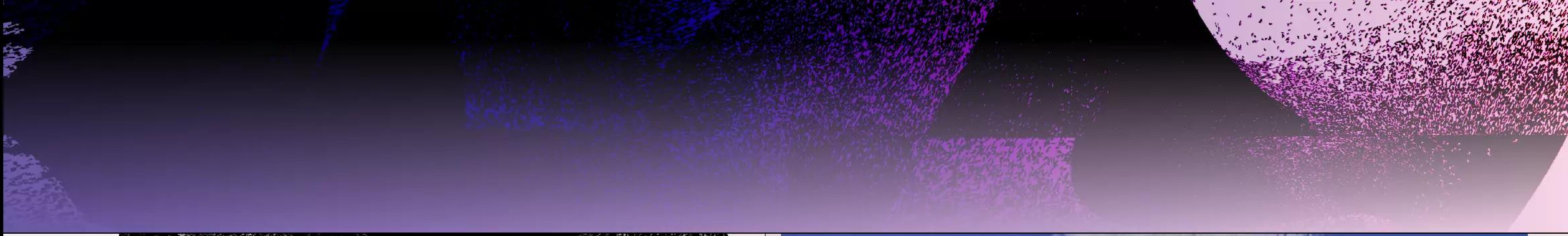
abkco

ABKCO congratulates all women in music, especially our COO, Alisa Coleman, on being named an honoree in Billboard's Women In Music 2025.
– JHK and your ABKCO Family

Congratulations to our 2025 Women in Music Honoree,

Sally Rose Larson

DIMA The voice of music streaming



> “Build your career on a strong foundation of good character. Strive to lift others up. There will be times where the industry feels very cold and transactional, but what can set you apart is working with integrity.”
>
> —PAMELA CORNEJO

Claudia García
Management director
VIBRAS LAB

As head of Vibras Lab’s management division based in Colombia, García made major strides with multiple international artists. Key highlights include Colombian Manuel Medrano’s new album launch and the expansion of his En Concierto tour, which filled venues across Latin America, the United States and Spain, including a sold-out Movistar Arena in Bogotá. Agudelo888 performed over 35 shows and opened for Karol G’s *Mañana Será Bonito* stadium tour, and regional Mexican artist Codiciado headlined his Enfocado comeback tour. “This past year has been a game-changer, with major sold-out tours, critically acclaimed releases, prestigious awards and breakthrough achievements,” García says. “I’m excited about the expansion of regional Mexican music — genres like corridos tumbados and ranchera are evolving and crossing over into global markets.”

Cris Garcia Falcão
Managing director of artist and label strategy/GM, Latin
VIRGIN MUSIC GROUP

Over the past five years, Virgin has built a global relationship with Brazilian indie label GR6 and its founder and CEO, Rodrigo Oliveira, which yielded big results with artist MC PH, who became one of the most streamed artists in Brazil and Portugal last year. “It’s wonderful to see the amazing creativity and continued growth from our partners,” Falcão says, also highlighting Latin Grammy-winning duo Anavitória, which released its fifth studio album, *Esquinas*, in December and has passed 26 million streams on Spotify.

Sandra García-Sanjuán
CEO, Starlite Foundation and Starlite Festivals
STARLITE HOLDINGS

Having produced the Starlite Occident music and culture festival in Marbella, Spain, since 2012, which now draws 350,000 attendees per year, García-Sanjuán expanded the brand to Madrid, launching the Starlite Christmas edition. “The expansion to Madrid has allowed us to surpass the half a million fans who live the Starlite experience every year,” she says. “We have fans from 96 countries, and our economic impact in Spain is major, generating over 400 million euros per year.” García-Sanjuán also presides over the Starlite Foundation and, for the past 15 years, has hosted its annual gala with actor Antonio Banderas, raising money for “foundational projects and opportunities for development, education and inclusion.”

María Mercedes Montejo
President, Andean region
SONY MUSIC COLOMBIA

Montejo prides herself on developing, from the ground up, talent whose potential exceeds trends. “Colombia’s music scene is incredibly rich and diverse, and under my leadership we’ve made bold artistic investments that are reshaping the industry,” Montejo says. Notably are four promising newcomers: Soley, a female urban artist managed by La Industria; Kei Linch, who opened for Nanpa Básico in Mexico; Junior Zamora, whose smooth R&B vocals are attracting attention; and Zaider, whose debut single under the label, “Alma,” is a collaboration with Kapo that laces *champeta* and Afrobeats and charted in 15 countries. These artists reflect Montejo’s “commitment to embodying the vision and strength of Sony Music’s culture across Latin America, starting in Colombia.”

Mexican pop star **Belinda** made a comeback by blending her signature pop sound with música mexicana, scoring hits like her solo “Cactus” and “300 Noches” alongside Natanael Cano.

Leila Oliveira
President
WARNER MUSIC BRAZIL

Warner Music Brazil’s expansion into diverse regions and musical genres over the past year showcases a dynamic and strategic cultivation of cultural ties under Oliveira. By forging “key partnerships” and “being really active in the main cultural scenes,” Oliveira has enhanced the label’s footprint across Brazil. The opening of new studios in collaboration with Warner Chappell Music marks a significant development, transforming them into cultural and professional hubs for artists, songwriters and partners. “It has been amazing to see results coming from our strategy, with a broader range of deals,” Oliveira says. Her visionary approach has been pivotal in solidifying Brazil’s role as a vibrant, cultural powerhouse.

Catalina Santa Peña
Managing director
WARNER CHAPPELL MUSIC ANDES

In 2024, Santa Peña helped spearhead Escucha Vol. 1, an “all-women composer camp,” which brought together 24 writers, composers and producers. They included Delfina Dib, Gaviria and Soy Emilia, who participated in three days of composition sessions for albums, synch projects and branded content in an environment of wellness and sisterhood. Named from the indigenous word *cucha*, meaning “woman more beautiful than the rainbow,” the camp underscored that “it’s not beauty or strength but our hearts that will transcend in time through music,” Santa Peña says. Additionally, the past year has brought new signings from Colombia, with artists like Akapellah, Juanse Navarro and Junior Zamora making their mark under the Warner Chappell banner. b

Contributors
Luisa Calle, Leila Cobo, Ingrid Fajardo, Griselda Flores, Sigal Ratner-Arias, Isabela Raygoza, Jessica Roiz

Methodology
Executives on *Billboard*’s Latin Women in Music list were selected by the magazine’s Latin editorial team. Industry nominations were not requested. Editorial choices were based on factors including the impact of honorees and their companies on consumer behavior, as measured by year-end *Billboard* Latin charts. Career trajectory and momentum were also considered. Unless otherwise noted, Billboard Boxscore and Luminate are the sources for tour grosses and sales/streaming data, respectively. Luminate is also the source for radio audience metrics. The source for radio metrics is monitored station airplay from Mediabase provided by Luminate. The same criteria were also applied to executives who work in the United States but whose purview is the Latin American region. Executives based outside the United States whose work falls largely within their own countries were also selected if they wield sufficient influence within those markets and if their work significantly affects charts, touring or branding activity outside their countries.

CORNEJO: NATHAN CORONA. BELINDA: DAVID CABRERA.

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2025

TOP MUSIC LAWYERS

Behind every artist, songwriter and music producer is a trusted group of advisers who provide guidance, advice and negotiate deals. *Billboard*'s 10th annual Top Music Lawyers list will recognize the biggest names and most prominent legal minds in the world of music and entertainment law. They are the deal-makers behind the major contracts and lawsuits in the music industry.

This feature will also include a round-up of premier law schools attended by the notable alumni on the Top Music Lawyers list.

Join us in congratulating the 2025 most powerful music lawyers. Advertise to present your law firm to *Billboard*'s influential subscribers, which include A-list artists, artist managers, business managers and label, publishing and touring executives

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ISSUE DATE 4/19 | AD CLOSE 4/8 | MATERIALS DUE 4/10

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ACADEMY OF COUNTRY MUSIC

2025

60TH ACM AWARDS PROGRAM GUIDE

The Academy of Country Music is a leading association for the country music industry that serves as a powerful advocate for country fans, artists and all facets of the business, as well as provides philanthropic aid through charitable partner ACM Lifting Lives. 2025 is a landmark year for the academy as it celebrates the 60th ACM Awards, which will be hosted by entertainment icon Reba McEntire. The May 8 awards return to the world headquarters of the Dallas Cowboys in Frisco, Texas, for a third consecutive year and stream live to a global audience on Prime Video.

Get your brand in front of 5,000-plus academy members, voters and music industry professionals in the ACM Awards program guide, produced by *Billboard*.
The guide will be distributed at the ceremony at the culmination of ACM Awards Week.

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ISSUE DATE 5/8 | AD CLOSE 4/3 | MATERIALS DUE 4/8

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GLOBAL
POWER
PLAYERS

2025

GLOBAL POWER PLAYERS

On May 17, *Billboard* will publish its annual Global Power Players Issue. This issue will profile leaders in the music industry outside the United States who are executives at record labels, music publishers, talent agencies and in live entertainment to recognize their achievements.

Advertise and congratulate this year's Global Power Players to reach an influential audience of decision-makers worldwide.

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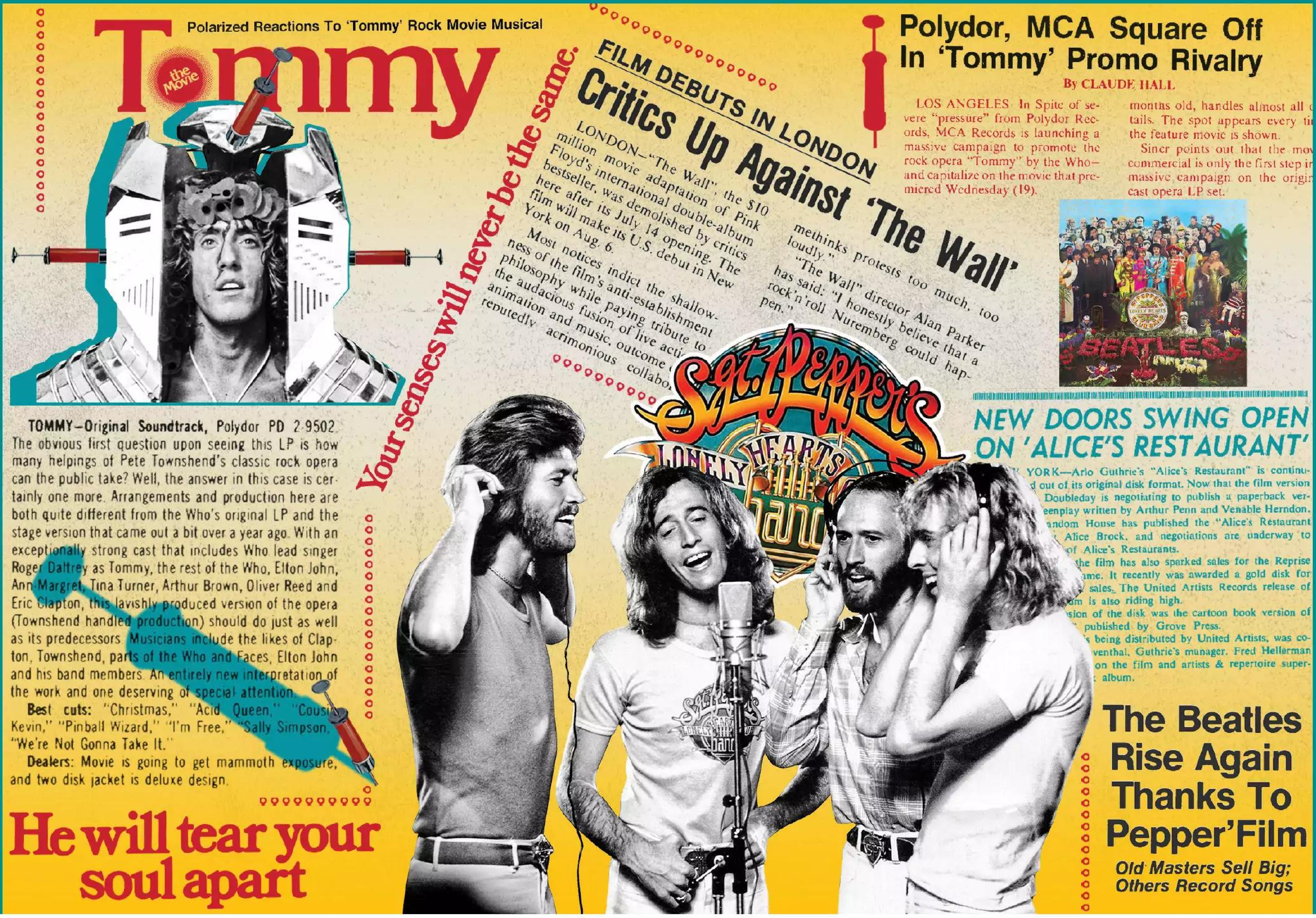
ISSUE DATE 5/17 | **AD CLOSE** 5/6 | **MATERIALS DUE** 5/8



Polarized Reactions To 'Tommy' Rock Movie Musical
Tommy
the Movie
Your senses will never be the same.
He will tear your soul apart
Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band
BEATLES

TOMMY—Original Soundtrack, Polydor PD 2-9502. The obvious first question upon seeing this LP is how many helpings of Pete Townshend's classic rock opera can the public take? Well, the answer in this case is certainly one more. Arrangements and production here are both quite different from the Who's original LP and the stage version that came out a bit over a year ago. With an exceptionally strong cast that includes Who lead singer Roger Daltrey as Tommy, the rest of the Who, Elton John, Ann-Margret, Tina Turner, Arthur Brown, Oliver Reed and Eric Clapton, this lavishly produced version of the opera (Townshend handled production) should do just as well as its predecessors. Musicians include the likes of Clapton, Townshend, parts of the Who and Faces, Elton John and his band members. An entirely new interpretation of the work and one deserving of special attention.

Best cuts: "Christmas," "Acid Queen," "Cousin Kevin," "Pinball Wizard," "I'm Free," "Sally Simpson," "We're Not Gonna Take It."

Dealers: Movie is going to get mammoth exposure, and two disk jacket is deluxe design.

FILM DEBUTS IN LONDON

Critics Up Against 'The Wall'

LONDON—"The Wall", the $10 million movie adaptation of Pink Floyd's international double-album bestseller, was demolished by critics here after its July 14 opening. The film will make its U.S. debut in New York on Aug. 6.

Most notices indict the shallowness of the film's anti-establishment philosophy while paying tribute to the audacious fusion of live acti

animation and music, outcome

reputedly acrimonious collabo

methinks protests too much, too loudly."

"The Wall" director Alan Parker has said: "I honestly believe that a rock'n'roll Nuremberg could happen."

Polydor, MCA Square Off In 'Tommy' Promo Rivalry

By CLAUDE HALL

LOS ANGELES In Spite of severe "pressure" from Polydor Records, MCA Records is launching a massive campaign to promote the rock opera "Tommy" by the Who—and capitalize on the movie that premiered Wednesday (19).

months old, handles almost all

tails. The spot appears every ti

the feature movie is shown.

Siner points out that the mov

commercial is only the first step ir

massive campaign on the origir

cast opera LP set.

NEW DOORS SWING OPEN ON 'ALICE'S RESTAURANT'

YORK—Arlo Guthrie's "Alice's Restaurant" is continu-

d out of its original disk format. Now that the film version

Doubleday is negotiating to publish a paperback ver-

eenplay written by Arthur Penn and Venable Herndon.

andom House has published the "Alice's Restaurant

Alice Brock, and negotiations are underway to

of Alice's Restaurants.

the film has also sparked sales for the Reprise

ame. It recently was awarded a gold disk for

sales. The United Artists Records release of

um is also riding high.

sion of the disk was the cartoon book version of

published by Grove Press.

being distributed by United Artists, was co-

venthal, Guthrie's manager. Fred Hellerman

on the film and artists & repertoire super-

album.

The Beatles Rise Again Thanks To Pepper'Film

Old Masters Sell Big; Others Record Songs

FACING THE MUSIC

On May 16, The Weeknd will bring his album *Hurry Up Tomorrow*, which topped the Billboard 200, to the big screen as a suspense thriller. *Tomorrow* has precedents in many yesterdays: Artists have been making movies out of albums, partly to boost their sales, for decades. March 19 marks the 50th anniversary of the premiere of The Who's *Tommy*. But The Who wasn't first — and it certainly wasn't the last.

ANYTHING YOU WANT

"Arlo Guthrie is about to become The Thing to talk and write about," trumpeted an ad in the Aug. 23, 1968, *Billboard* for the just-released *Alice's Restaurant* movie based on his 1967 album of the same name. Soon, Guthrie's name was littering the pages of *Billboard*, and a piece in the Oct. 18 issue said the film "sparked sales for the Reprise album ... racking up $1 million sales." A month later, the Nov. 15 issue showed the set at a new chart peak of No. 17 on the Billboard 200, two years after its release.

SEE IT, FEEL IT, BUY IT

Six years after The Who released *Tommy*, the British rockers followed it with a 1975 film starring Roger Daltrey as the titular pinball wizard. The Ken Russell movie was divisive: The March 29, 1975, *Billboard* ran two reviews. One praised it as a "gripping fantasmagoria," while another panned it as a "travesty of worn-out symbolism and general tackiness." The same issue also reported on "the record war between the original rock opera and the movie soundtrack," which were on MCA and Polydor, respectively. Buyers bought in, pushing the soundtrack to No. 2 on the Billboard 200, above the original album's No. 4 peak.

BAND FROM THE 'CLUB'

When the Bee Gees' 1978 jukebox musical *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* hit theaters, expectations were as high as Lucy in the sky. The July 29, 1978, *Billboard* reported that the soundtrack of Beatles covers was "taxing virtually every record presser, jacket printing facility and freight company contracted to get the initial order of four million units in the hands of consumers." A report from an advance screening told a different story: "A movie where the audience laughs at all the wrong moments is in trouble, no matter what its advertising budget." It was a boon for The Beatles, at least: "Sales of Capitol's Beatles catalog are surging," according to the Aug. 26 issue.

HITTING A 'WALL'

Pink Floyd's *The Wall*, *Billboard*'s No. 1 album of 1980, famously inspired an animated film of the same name. Unfortunately, critics wanted to run like hell. "The $10 million movie adaptation of Pink Floyd's international double-album bestseller was demolished" at a London premiere, reported the Aug. 7, 1982, issue. Despite an end-credits promise of a forthcoming soundtrack, one never appeared. "We intended to make a soundtrack album," David Gilmour told the Sept. 18 *Billboard*. "But we just didn't have enough new music to reasonably justify putting one out."

—JOE LYNCH

ILLUSTRATION BY BARBARA GIBSON

TOMMY: COURTESY OF EVERETT COLLECTION. SGT. PEPPER'S: UNIVERSAL/COURTESY OF EVERETT COLLECTION.

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Celine Dion
Common
Cyndi Lauper
Darryl McDaniels (Run DMC)
David Byrne
David Foster
Def Leppard
Dionne Warwick
Duran Duran
Elvis Costello
Gavin Rossdale (Bush)
Gene Simmons (KISS)
George Strait
Gloria Estefan
Graham Nash
Hootie & The Blowfish
James Taylor
Jason Aldean
Jelly Roll
Jewel
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Kate Hudson
LeAnn Rimes
Lin-Manuel Miranda
Mariah Carey
Marshmello
Matchbox Twenty
MC Lyte
Melissa Etheridge
Melle Mel
Miranda Lambert
New Kids on the Block
Ozzy Osbourne
P!nk
Paul Stanley (KISS)
Peter Frampton
R.E.M.
Randy Travis
Reba
Sara Bareilles
Sheryl Crow
Smokey Robinson
Steve Miller
Stevie Nicks
The Go-Go's
The Lumineers
TLC
Train
Weezer

AND MORE

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